KEINETH

JANE D. ABBOTT

ORPHANS OF THE ATTIC
DOLL MUSEUM AND ANTIQUES
514 W. WEBSTER
CHICAGO, IL

KEINETH

KEINETH

BY

JANE D. ABBOTT

AUTHOR OF

HAPPY HOUSE, LARKSPUR, ETC

GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

Made in the United States of America

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

TO

ALL THE LITTLE GIRLS I KNOW

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Keineth's World Changes	11
II.	Keineth Decides	20
III.	Overlook	33
IV.	Keineth Writes to Her Father	45
V.	Pilot Comes to Overlook	53
VI.	The Music the Fairies Put in Her Fingers	63
VII.	Alice Runs Away	72
VIII.	A Page from History	81
IX.	The Captive Maiden	90
X.	Pilot in Disgrace	100
XI.	Pilot Wins a Home	107
XII.	A Letter from Daddy	116
XIII.	Camping	125
XIV.	The Tennis Tournament	135
XV.	Not on the Program	144
XVI.	Aunt Josephine	153
XVII.	School Days	163
XVIII.	Christmas	175
XIX.	When the Christmas Spirit Worked Overtime	185
XX.	Shadows	196
XXI.	Pilot Goes Away	205
XXII.	Keineth's Gift	214
XXIII.	Surprises	226
XXIV.	Mr. President	233
XXV.	The Castle of Dreams	242

KEINETH

CHAPTER I

KEINETH'S WORLD CHANGES

KEINETH RANDOLPH'S world seemed suddenly to be turning upside down!

For the past three days there had been no lessons. Keineth had lessons instead of going to school. She had them sometimes with Madame Henri, or "Tante" as she called her, and sometimes with her father. If the sun was very inviting in the morning, lessons would wait until afternoon; or, if, sitting straight and still in the big room her father called his study, Keineth found it impossible to think of the book before her, Tante would say in her prim voice:

"Dreaming, chérie?" and add, "the books will wait!"

Or, if father was hearing the lessons, he would toss aside the book and beckon to Keineth to sit on his knee. Then he would tell a story. It would

be, perhaps, something about India or they would travel together through Norway; or it would be Custer's fight with the Indians or the wanderings of the Acadians through the English Colonies in America, as portrayed in Longfellow's Evangeline.

But for three days Keineth had had neither lessons nor stories—she had not even wanted to go out into the park to walk. For her dear Tante, with a very sad face, was packing her trunks and boxes, and Daddy had gone out of town.

To-morrow the little woman was going to sail on a Norwegian boat for Europe. The trip seemed to Keineth to be particularly unusual because Tante and Daddy had talked so much about it and Tante had waited until Daddy had gotten her some papers which would take her safely into Europe. So much talk and the important papers made it seem as though she was going very far away. Perhaps she did not expect to come back to America—she stopped so often in her work to kiss Keineth!

Keineth could not remember her own mother, she had died when Keineth was three years old; and as far back as she could remember Tante had always taken care of her. These three, the golden-

haired, delicate child, the serious-faced Belgian gentlewoman, who had given up a position in one of New York's schools to go into John Randolph's household, and the father himself, living for his work and his daughter, led what might seem to others a very strange life. The man had kept his home in the old brick house on Washington Square in lower New York even after the other houses in the square around it gradually changed from pleasant, neat homes to shabby boarding-houses or rooming houses with broken windows and railless steps; to dusty lofts; to cellars where Jews kept and sorted over their filthy rags; to dingy attic spaces where artists made their studios, turning queer, dilapidated corners into what they called their homes. The third story of the Randolph house had been let for "light housekeeping apartments"; Keineth herself had helped tack the little black and gilt sign at the door. The tenants used the side door that let into the brick-paved alley. Keineth had always felt a great pride in their home—it was always neatly painted, their steps shone, and there were no papers collected behind their iron gratings. Even across the park she could see the bright geraniums blooming

in the windows under Madame Henri's loving care.

Keineth and Tante had two big sleeping rooms facing the square and Daddy had a smaller room in the back. Dora, the colored maid who kept the house in order and cooked breakfast and lunch, went away at night. The rooms were very large, with high ceilings. The windows were long and narrow and hung with heavy, dusty curtains. The furniture was very old and very dull and dark, but Keineth loved the great chairs into which she could curl herself and read for hours at a time.

There were few children in the square for her to play with. Next door was an Italian family with eight girls and boys, and Keineth sometimes joined them in the park. Their father kept a fruit stall in the basement on one of the streets running off from the square. Francesca, one of the girls, sang very sweetly, often standing on the corner of the square and singing Italian folk-songs until she had gathered quite a crowd around her and had collected considerable money. Keineth loved to listen to her. But Daddy had asked Keineth never to go alone outside of the square nor out of sight of the windows of

their own home, and Keineth, all her life, had always wanted to do exactly as her father asked her.

The evenings to Keineth were the happiest, for, after his work was finished, Daddy always took her out somewhere for dinner. Sometimes they would go into queer, small places; rooms lighted by gas-jets, where they ate on bare tables from off thick white plates. She would sit very quietly listening while her father talked to the people he met. It seemed to her that her father knew everybody. Other times they would go up town on the bus, Keineth clinging tightly to her father's hand all the way, and they would find a corner in a brightly lighted hotel dining-room, where the silver and glass sparkled before Keineth's eyes, where an orchestra, hidden behind big palms, played wonderful music as they ate, where the air was sweet with the fragrance of flowers like Joe Massey's stall on the square, and where all the women were pretty and wore soft furs over shimmering dresses of lovely colors. Sometimes Tante went with them, looking very prim in her tailor-made suit of gray woolen cloth and her small gray hat. On these picnic dinners, as Daddy called them, Daddy was always in

rollicking spirits, keeping up such a torrent of nonsense that Keineth was often quite exhausted from laughing. Then, when they were back in the old house, Daddy would pull his big chair close to the lamp, Tante would take her knitting from the basket in which it was always neatly laid, and Keineth would sit down at the piano to play for her father "what the fairies put in her fingers." This had been a little game between them for a long time—ever since her music lessons with Madame Henri had begun.

Now—as the child sat balanced on the edge of an old rocker watching Tante tenderly and carefully placing her books into a heavy box—she felt that this beloved order of things was changing before her eyes. For, with Tante gone, who was to take care of her? And heavy on the child's heart lay the fear that it might be Aunt Josephine.

Aunt Josephine was her very own aunt, her father's sister, and lived in a very pretentious home at the other end of the city, overlooking the Hudson River. At a very early age Keineth had guessed that Aunt Josephine did not approve of the way her Daddy lived; of the tenants on the third floor; of the

sign at the door; of Tante and the happy-go-lucky lessons; and most of all, her intimacy with the Italian children. Twice a year Keineth and her Daddy spent a Sunday with Aunt Josephine, and Keineth could always tell by the way Daddy clasped her hand and ran down the steps that he was very glad when the day was over and they could go home. However, Aunt Josephine was pretty and wore lovely clothes like the women in the big hotels uptown and was really fond of Daddy, so that Keineth loved her—but she did not want to live with her!

"Why do you go away from us?" Keineth asked Madame Henri for the hundredth time.

The little woman dropped a book to kiss the child—also for the hundredth time.

"I have an old mother, and a sister, and six nephews and nieces over there—they need me now, more than you do, chérie!"

Keineth knew that she was very unhappy and refrained from asking her more questions. Daddy had read to her of the suffering in Europe as a result of the great war, but it seemed hard to picture prim Tante in the midst of it—perhaps working in the fields and factories, as Daddy said some of the

women and children were doing. Tante had read them parts of a letter telling of the wounding of her sister's husband at the battle front and of his death in an English hospital, but that had seemed so very far away that Keineth had not thought much about it. Now it seemed nearer as she pictured the six little nephews and nieces, the poor old grandmother—perhaps all hungry and homeless! Keineth suddenly thought how good it was of Tante to leave their comfortable home and their jolly dinners and Dora's steaming pancakes to go back to Belgium to help!

Then—as if the whole day was not queer and different enough, Keineth suddenly heard her father's quick step on the stairway. He had said he would not be home until that night! She sprang to the door in time to rush into his arms as he came down the hallway. He kissed her, on her nose and eyes, as was his way, but when he lifted his face Keineth saw that it was very serious, which was not at all like Daddy.

"Run out in the park for a little while, dear. I must talk to Madame Henri!"

The sun was shining very brightly on the pave-

ments of the streets. The little leaves on the trees were quivering with new life and the birds were chirping loudly and busily in the branches, fussing over their housekeeping. But Keineth's heart was too heavy to respond! She walked around and around the square, staring miserably at the people who passed her and always keeping in sight of the long windows where the pink geraniums shone in the spring sunlight.

Suddenly her heart dropped to her very toes and she had a great deal of trouble keeping the tears back from her eyes, for a very bright yellow motor car had stopped at their door, and Keineth knew that it was Aunt Josephine!

CHAPTER II

KEINETH DECIDES

KEINETH waited what seemed to her hours; then retraced her steps to the house and walked very quietly into the hall. Daddy heard the door close behind her and called to her from the study. He was sitting at his desk, tapping the pad before him with the point of a pencil. Aunt Josephine sat on the old horse-hair sofa, looking very excited, and Tante, a pile of books still clasped in her arm and a smudge of dust across her straight features, stood near the window.

"I think it's high time you used a little sense in the way you bring up that child, John. You'll ruin her!"

Keineth's father smiled across at Keineth as much as to say: "Never mind, dear," but he listened gravely as his sister went on:

"I think it's the best thing that could happen—Madame Henri going away and you called on this trip——"

"Wait a moment, Josephine; Keineth does not know yet——"

"Daddy!" cried the child, running to him.

"Just a moment, dear," he whispered, as he drew her between his knees and laid his cheek against her hair.

Aunt Josephine looked very much in earnest. Keineth could not remember a time when she had seemed more concerned over hers and Daddy's welfare!

"Now I can take Keineth with me until July. Then when I go on that yachting cruise she can go to some camp in the mountains—there are ever so many good ones. And next fall I can put her into a school. She's too old to go on living as you are living."

Now the world had turned upside down! Keineth pressed suddenly close to her father. He tightened the clasp of her arm.

"Wait a moment, sister. We have two or three days to talk this over. I must get Madame Henri safely started and then Keineth and I will make our plans." As he said this he squeezed the child's hand. "You're awfully good to offer to take my little girl

and I know you'd try your best to make her happy." He stepped toward the door. Aunt Josephine rose, too.

"Well, you'd better follow my advice," she said crisply. She almost always concluded their interviews in this manner when they had to do with Daddy's household. This time she stopped on her way to the door to place her hands on Keineth's shoulders and let her eyes sweep Keineth's little face.

"I'd make an up-to-date child of her, John. She's got her mother's eyes but the Randolph features. With a little grooming she'd make a beauty. And the first thing I'd do would be to put a decent frock on her!"

Keineth knew that Aunt Josephine meant to be kind but, hurt at her criticism, she drew away from her aunt's clasp. As her aunt and father went out she looked down wonderingly at the simple blue serge she wore. Tante had always had her dresses made at a little shop on lower Fifth Avenue and Keineth had always thought them very nice.

Madame Henri, muttering to herself, went out of the room. Keineth stood very still until her father came back. He shut the door and went to

his desk. She ran to him and hid her face on his shoulder.

"Daddy—are you—going away?"

"Yes, child—I must."

"For all summer? For all winter?"

"Yes, dear. I think it may be a year."

"Daddy——" began Keineth, then stopped short to hide her face. Father must not see her cry!

"I'll make a little picture for you, dear. This country of ours is like a great big house. It's like all the homes all over the United States put into one. And it must be tended just as we'd tend our own little home—it must be kept in repair. It must be kept clean and have pretty spots, just like Madame Henri's geraniums! And it must be guarded, too, from those who would break in and steal what belongs in the home—or tear it down and make a ruin of it! And it must know its neighbors and work with them to keep everything peaceful and tidy about the whole street of nations! Don't you remember how I had to argue with Signora Ferocci to make her clean up her back alley?"

They both laughed together over the recollection

of their efforts to persuade their next-door neighbor of the joys of cleanliness!

"Every person, big and small, should do his part toward the home-keeping of this big land of ours. And I have been asked to do a service. Soldiers can't do it all, my dear—only a very small part of it! There are a great many others—men like myself—who are going out over the world to work for the Stars and Stripes. And when I have been asked to go on a mission for our country that is very important, even though it takes me very far and keeps me away a very long time, I am sure my loyal little American girl will be the first to bid me go!"

Keineth's eyes were quite dry now and were very bright. She sat up very straight. She had entirely forgotten herself.

"Will you wear a uniform, Daddy?"

"Oh, dear me, no—my work is not of that sort. In fact, I must go about in the quietest manner possible. I cannot even tell my little girl where I am going."

"You mean it's a secret?" the child cried.

"Yes, until I return. I must ask you to tell no

one that I have gone for the government. We may fail—the newspapers must not know yet. Everyone must think I am simply travelling."

Keineth was silent and perplexed. It did not occur to her to ask her father why she could not go with him. He had often gone away before and she had always stayed in the old house with Tante. But it had never been for a whole year!

Suddenly she cried out: "I'll be very brave, but—oh, Daddy!"

He laughed, although he held her very close.

"Do you think, my dear, I would go away until I felt very certain that you were going to be happy? I'm not sure how well you'd like it at Aunt Josephine's—it would be very different. Still—you'd have that French maid of hers for a nurse and go out with her and Fido for his walk and ride in the yellow motor and have all kinds of frilled dresses and feathered hats——" He was imitating Aunt Josephine's voice in a very funny manner that made Keineth laugh.

Keineth thought very quickly of all the things she loved to do that she knew Aunt Josephine would not allow her to do, but she did not want to speak

of them, for it might make her Daddy unhappy. Her father went on, more seriously:

"But I have another plan. I will tell you about it and you may choose between that and Aunt Josephine's." (Keineth suddenly felt very grown up.) "Coming up from Washington I ran into Mr. William Lee, an old friend of mine—a man I knew in college. I used to think the world of him. I hadn't seen him for fifteen years! He lives in the western part of the state. I knew Mrs. Lee, too,—she was a friend of your mother's and they were very fond of one another. We talked for a long time over old times. He showed me kodak pictures of his children—he has four. Do you know what I thought when I looked at them?"

"What, Daddy?"

"That I was cheating my little girl out of a great deal that every child has a right to—the pure joy of living. When I looked at those youngsters of his—husky, bare-armed, round-cheeked children, I knew they were getting a lot of happiness you'd never know in this little corner of ours—the kind of happiness you can only have when you are young."

Keineth was puzzled. "What do you mean, Daddy?"

"Oh, running, jumping, swimming—tennis—baseball! Why, the knowing other children well—even the quarrelling," he stopped, frowning. "I had it all when I was little and here I am cheating you. Aunt Josephine is right when she says I'm not fair to you—but I don't think you'd get it even with her!"

"But I don't know anything about all those things, Daddy."

"That's just it! You can learn, though. I told Mr. Lee that I had to go away, and about you, and he asked me if I wouldn't let you go to them for the year. They have a summer home on the shore of Lake Erie and almost live out-of-doors. I said no at first—it seemed too much to ask of them, but he persisted and wouldn't take no for an answer. He is coming here to-night to talk it over. I think now—it might be the thing to do. Mrs. Lee loved your mother very, very dearly, and I know would be very good to you."

He gently lifted her down from off his knee, which meant that he had work to do and that Keineth

must leave the room. She sought out Tante upstairs. The good woman had closed her last box and was dressed ready to start on her long trip, although the boat would not leave until the next day. She was knitting, so Keineth took a book and sat near the window pretending to read. Her eyes wandered off the page and her poor little mind was busy at work trying to decide which she would dislike the least—living with Aunt Josephine and walking with Fido and the French maid and going to a strange camp and a strange school, or going off to a strange place and living among strange people and playing strange games! She wanted dreadfully to cry, but Tante was so quiet and so miserable, and Daddy was so serious that she could not add in any way to what seemed to trouble them.

So—although Francesca, the little Italian singer, was skipping rope on the pavement below the window, and a robin was calling lustily to its mate in a nearby horse-chestnut tree, and a vender was peddling his wares down the street in a voice that sounded like a slow-pealing bell, poor Keineth felt as if she could never be really happy again!

That night Daddy and Keineth went uptown for dinner. In one of the hotels they met Mr. Lee. Keineth's heart was pounding with dread beneath her neat serge dress and she was almost afraid to look at the man. But when he took her hand in his and spoke in a kindly voice, she ventured a timid glance and saw a big man, taller and heavier than her father, with a jolly smile and eyes that laughed from under their shaggy eyebrows. Then she felt that she liked him—and the more because he had such an affectionate way of laying his hand on her father's shoulder.

While they talked together Mr. Lee watched her very closely. Once he said to her father:

"My wife will love the little girl—she is so like her mother!" There had been a long silence then, and Keineth had seen the look in her father's eyes that meant his thoughts were back in the past. Later Mr. Lee had added: "Why, John—you won't know the child after a summer with us—those cheeks will all be roses and her little body plump. And how the kiddies will love her!"

Keineth had been shown the kodak pictures and had studied them closely. The very big girl was

Barbara, who was seventeen. The boy was Billy, aged fourteen. Peggy was Keineth's age—twelve, and the little one, Alice, was eight. They all wore middy blouses in the picture and Peggy and Alice were barefooted. Keineth thought, as she looked at their laughing faces, that they were very unlike any children she had ever seen anywhere.

They took Mr. Lee to their home. Keineth played on the piano for them—not her own fairy things, but a simple little piece she had learned with much precision from Madame Henri. Then she and Tante went upstairs. Daddy had whispered to her as she kissed him good-night:

"You must decide yourself, dear!"

Keineth had thought that when she was quite alone in her bedroom she would cry, for then it would disturb no one and she really had a great deal to cry about. But Madame Henri lingered a long time by her bed, standing close to it with a very white face. Finally she knelt beside it and laid her cheek against Keineth's hands. Keineth felt hot tears which surprised her, for she did not know that Tante knew how to cry. Then Tante began to pray—a queer sort of prayer, all broken:

"Oh, God, oh, God, keep this little girl safe from the things that hurt! Keep all the little ones! Why should they suffer? Where is your mercy?" Then she said a great deal in French so fast that Keineth could not understand her and finally, sobbing violently, she rushed out of the room, leaving Keineth very disturbed. She thought that poor Tante must love her very much and she supposed the prayer was for the little children in Europe who were starving, as well as for her—Keineth Randolph! Madame Henri's good heart so moved her that she jumped out of bed to kneel beside it and add what she had forgotten in her concern over herself!

"God bless dear, dear Tante and keep her safe!"

Then, feeling very excited, Keineth went to sleep without crying and dreamed of running barefooted with Peggy through fields all white with daisies, while in the distance at a fence like the rail fences in pictures, stood Aunt Josephine's awful French maid with Fido under her arm, screaming at her in French.

So vivid seemed the dream that it awakened Keineth. She listened for a moment. She could

hear the click of her father's typewriter. She pressed the button that lighted her bed lamp, found her slippers and stole noiselessly downstairs. Never in her whole life had she disturbed her Daddy when he was writing, but now she did not even rap—she pushed the door open and ran to him.

"Daddy, Daddy——" she cried as though still pursued by the screaming French maid. "Please—I'd rather go to the Lee's!"

CHAPTER III

OVERLOOK

"The next station is Fairview, Keineth—watch out for the kiddies," said Mr. Lee, rising from the car seat.

Keineth had been sitting for a half hour with her nose flattened against the car window, not seeing at all the fields and farmhouses that flew past her, but trying to picture what Peggy would be like! Keineth was very excited and a little tired from the night in the sleeper; she was fighting back the thought that she would not see Daddy for a long, long time. Daddy had gone with them to the station the night before, and had helped her undress in the queer little shelf he called a berth and had himself pulled the blankets close around her chin and kissed her again and again.

"Little soldier—right face," he whispered—and Keineth knew that he meant she should be very brave over it all. Then he had hurried off the train, for the conductor was shouting: "All aboard——"

and Keineth, peeping from under her curtain for a last look, had seen his tall figure go down the dimly-lighted platform.

The engine whistled and slowed down. Keineth took up the new bag which had been Aunt Josephine's present to her, and followed Mr. Lee to the door. Around the corner of his arm she saw a freckled-faced boy running close to the car step, and beyond him two little girls.

The taller of the two must, of course, be Peggy! Keineth saw a bob-headed, slim child of about her own height, brown as a berry.

"Dad—Dad," they cried, running forward as Mr. Lee stepped down from the train almost strangled in Billy's hug. In their joy at seeing their father the girls did not notice Keineth, who stood shyly back, wishing the ground would open and swallow her up.

But the ground under the station platform was unusually solid! In a moment Keineth felt three pairs of eyes upon her as Mr. Lee turned and said:

"Here is the little stranger I have brought with me."

"Hello," said Peggy, smiling. Alice smiled,

too, but hung back a little, and Billy swept a critical glance over Keineth's city-clad little figure. Mr. Lee, holding Alice's hand in his, was walking toward an automobile in which sat the eldest daughter.

"I'm awfully glad you came," began Peggy as the children followed. "It'll be such fun!"

"Is this Keineth?" cried the girl in the automobile, jumping out to greet her father. Keineth had pictured Barbara as quite a young lady—she had always thought seventeen very old—but Barbara was dressed in a blue skirt and a middy blouse like Peggy's and wore her hair in a long, thick braid. She had her father's kind eyes and the friendliness of their glance warmed poor little Keineth's homesick soul. She gave the child a little pat on the shoulder.

"We're just awfully glad you're here," she said, taking Keineth's bag. Then, to her father: "We didn't think Genevieve would run! She's been acting awful—but we just made her crawl up here to meet you."

"Genevieve's the name of the automobile," giggled Peggy as the smaller girls cuddled into the back

seat. Billy rode on the running board and Barbara took the steering wheel.

"Mother's fine," Barbara was saying while, at the same time, Billy was pouring into his father's ear a great deal of information concerning his wireless. Peggy in breathless, excited words was pointing out to the bewildered Keineth the sights of Fairview.

Genevieve, with many puffs and snorts and queer noises from under her bonnet, crawled gallantly along the smooth road, up a hill, turned in between two stone posts and stopped. Down the steps ran a woman who seemed to Keineth only a little older than Barbara. She kissed Mr. Lee, then, pushing the eager children aside, turned to Keineth.

"Here she is, mother," called out Peggy, drawing Keineth forward.

Mrs. Lee took Keineth in her arms and held her very close for a moment. When she released her she put her hand under Keineth's chin to lift her face.

"It's like seeing your mother again," she laughed, although there was a queer little catch in her voice.

"You'll be Peggy's twin," she added, starting up the steps. "Bring in their bags, Billy. Barb—

let's give Dad a nice hot cup of coffee! Peggy, you make Keineth perfectly at home."

Keineth took off her hat and coat. Very willingly Peggy took her in charge.

"I'll show you the garden," she said.

"Let's go down to the beach!" cried Alice, following.

"Do you want to see my wireless set?" invited Billy.

"Billy thinks that's the only interesting thing about Overlook!"

"Wait a moment, children," suggested Mrs. Lee to them, "one thing at a time! Keineth is tired, perhaps. Take her upstairs, Peggy, and let her slip on a blouse and your old serge bloomers—then go outside and play!"

Overlook really wasn't like a house at all—Keineth had never seen anything quite like it. There was one big living-room with a veranda running around it and with big doors opening from three sides upon the veranda so that the room itself was just like out-of-doors. One end of the veranda was enclosed in glass and used as a dining-room. Flowers in boxes were on the sills of the windows and over

them the sun streamed through chintz-curtained windows. Upstairs were two rooms over the living-rooms, and opening from these were screened sleeping porches, with rows of little cots. Peggy explained that the rooms were used as dressing-rooms and that each one of the family had a little chest of drawers for their own clothes and that mother had brought the oak one in the corner out from town for Keineth's use.

"But where do you sleep when it rains?" cried Keineth.

"Oh, out there," laughed Peggy; "you see, the roof slants down so far that it keeps out the rain. That's your cot—between Barb's and mine."

Keineth caught a glimpse of a great blue stretch of water glistening in the bright sunlight a quarter of a mile away.

"Oh—is that the lake?" she exclaimed, eagerly.

"Yes—we'll go down to the beach in a little while. Can you swim? Mother will teach you—she taught each one of us. I'm going to try for the life-saving medal this year! We have sport contests at the club in August. Can you play tennis?"

Keineth said no. Peggy's manner became just a little patronizing. "Oh, it's easy to learn, though it'll take you quite awhile to serve a good ball, but you can practice with Alice. Can you play golf?"

"My Daddy can."

"Well, you can walk around the links with Billy and me. Barbara plays a dandy game—she can beat Dad all to pieces. Let's go down now and see the garden."

Beyond the neatly-kept lawn with its bricked walks bordered with nasturtium beds was the stretch of garden in which the children had their individual beds. Peggy explained to Keineth that Billy this year had planted his bed to radishes and onions; that she had put in her seed in a pattern of her own designing which, when she separated the weeds from the flowers would look like a splendid combination of a new moon and the Big Dipper. Barbara and Alice had planted asters and snapdragon because mother liked them for the house. Back of the flower beds was a patch of young corn, and behind that the vegetable garden which supplied the table. At one side of the garden was the

barn where poor Genevieve was now resting her rickety bones, and next to that was a shed.

Billy was busy at work repairing the door of the shed. As the girls came in sight he waved to them. They started on a run.

"Let's give Ken a ride on Gypsy," he called out. He dropped his hammer, disappeared in the barn and came out leading a shaggy pony.

At the sound of the nickname carelessly bestowed upon her Keineth drew in her breath quickly. Right at that moment she wanted more than anything else in the world that these children should not think she was a bit different from them! Already her plain serge dress had been hung away and she was in a blouse and bloomers like Peggy's!

"I don't know," began Peggy doubtfully.

"Oh, please, let me have a ride," broke in Keineth in a voice she tried to make as careless as Billy's own.

"We always ride Gypsy bareback—climb up here on these boxes!"

Keineth stepped upon the boxes, Billy wheeled the pony around and Keineth bravely swung one leg over the pony's back, taking the halter in her hand

as she did so. Billy gave the pony a sound slap on the shoulder and off they flew!

Never in her life had Keineth been on a horse's back, but she had caught the challenge in Billy's laughing eyes and her soul flamed with daring. She clenched her teeth tightly and, because she was in mortal terror of slipping off from the pony, she gripped her knees with all her might against his shaggy sides. In a funny little gallop—very like a rocking horse—he circled the house, while from the shed Billy and Peggy shouted to her encouragingly.

Keineth's first ride would have ended triumphantly if she had not laid her hand ever so lightly on a certain spot in Gypsy's neck! For Gypsy, having reached an age when he was of no further use in their business, had been bought a year before from a circus company by Mr. Lee and taken to Overlook, and at the time of the purchase no one had explained to Mr. Lee that Gypsy's training had included quietly throwing the clown from her back in a way which had always won screams of laughter from the spectators and that the little act came at the moment when the clown touched a certain spot on her neck! All the young Lees had ridden Gypsy but had not

happened to discover this little trick. But Keineth, just as she had safely passed the kitchen door and was galloping toward the shed, suddenly felt herself flying over Gypsy's head! Her fall was broken by a pile of sand which had been hauled up from the beach for the garden. Keineth was more startled than hurt, though she felt a little stunned and lay for a moment very still.

"Oh, are you hurt?" cried Peggy, running quickly to her with Billy at her heels.

"Oh, I s'pose she'll cry and bring mother out!" Keineth heard Billy say behind Peggy's back.

Keineth's cheeks were very red. She stood up quickly and, though for a moment everything danced before her eyes, she managed to laugh and speak in a queer voice she scarcely recognized as her own.

"'Course I'm not hurt! A little fall like that!" she brushed the sand from her blouse.

"Peggy," cried Billy, joyfully, "she's a real scout!" and Keineth knew then that she was one of them.

Even Peggy's tone was different. "Let's ask mother if we can't go down to the beach before

lunch!" she called out over her shoulder, starting houseward on a run.

That night a very tired little girl crept into her cot between Barbara's and Peggy's. Alice was already asleep on the other side of Peggy. Barbara was still on the veranda talking with her mother and father. A soft land breeze, all sweet with garden smells, fanned their faces as the girls lay there. What a day it had been to Keineth—she had played in the sand, waded in the warm shallows of the lake, raced with Peggy and Alice through the fields all white with daisies and had gathered great bunches of the pretty flowers! She thought, as she lay there watching the little stars peeping under the edge of the roof, that she had never been so happy in her life! She loved Overlook and all the Lees—and Peggy, best of all.

In whispers, reaching out from their cots to clasp hands, she and Peggy opened their hearts to one another. She told Peggy all about poor, nice Tante and about the old house and Francesca Ferocci and Aunt Josephine and Fido and the French maid, and the tenants on the third floor and her Daddy—who'd gone away on a secret. Peggy, very sleepily pictured

what they'd do on the morrow and the day after and the day after that. Later, when Mrs. Lee went her rounds, as she always did, tucking a cover under each loved chin, she found Keineth's fair curls very close to Peggy's round bobbed head and their hands still clasping.

CHAPTER IV

KEINETH WRITES TO HER FATHER

My dear, dear, dearest Daddy,

I have decided to write down all my thoughts and send them to you just like the diry Tante used to keep in her brown book that had the lock on it, then she would lose the key and ring her hands and think Dinah had taken it, then she would find it under her burow cover where she had hidden it all the time. I am trying to be a good soldier. It was very hard at first, I could not keep myself from thinking all the time of you and Tante and our happy home where it must be all dark and dusty now like it was after we had been in the mountains with Aunt Josephine, only worse. I do love it here, but it is not a bit like anything I have ever seen at home or riding with Aunt Josephine. It is like a house and like we were living right out doors, for there are so many windows and we sleep in a big room just with a roof. I sleep right next to Peggy; we always talk before we go to sleep, which is lots of fun, only Peggy never listens until I finish. I say good-night to a big bright star becose I pretend that star is shining down where you are writing somewhere and maybe will tell you that your little girl is saying good-night. Way off toward the end of the sky there is a funny little star that is very hard to see, and I say good-night to that for Tante becose she is so far away, too.

Barbara helped me find on the map where she had gone and Mr. Lee said poor thing. I do wish I knew if she was unhappy.

We live downstairs in a great big room and eat there and everything, it seems just as if flowers grew right in it, for there are boxes of them at the windows and on the veranda, and Aunt Nellie puts big bunches of them all around the room and Peggy has a bird that lives in a white cage in the window and sings all the time, I guess becose the sun shines on him. The furniture is not gold at all like Aunt Josephine's and it is not big like we have at home and there are only one or two rugs and the floor shines; Aunt Nellie does not fuss when we children move things around and we have lots of fun. There is a big fireplace made of rocks Billy says they pulled up from the beach. One time Mr. Lee lighted some big logs in it and we all sat round and told terrible storys of pirates and things we made up most, but Billy could think of the worst and Mr. Lee and Aunt Nellie sat with us and told some just like they were children, too. Sometimes Aunt Nellie seems just like a girl, she is so jolly, she is not a bit like Aunt Josephine, though I am sure Aunt Josephine is a very nice lady and I don't mean that I don't love her, only Aunt Nellie kisses me as if she liked too and does not just peck my cheek. Last week she brought me home some lovly middy bloses like Peggy wears, and I play in bloomers all day and put on a white skirt for supper; Mr. Lee says Peggy and I look like twins. Auntie brought me a bathing suit, too, and a tennis raket Peggy says is

better than hers. She folded away all my hair ribbons, she said we would not bother with them in the country. Barbara wears middy bloses, too, but she cannot wear bloomers becose she is too old though she does not look old or grownup. She is going away to school in the fall and Auntie and she are getting her close ready. Alice is just a little girl and is some fun, although she crys real often Peggy says she is spoiled. Auntie says she will outgrow that and that Peggy cryed just as much when she was like Alice is. I wish I could see you becose I would like to ask you many questions about when I was a little girl. I am sure if I had a little sister like Alice I would try and be more polite than Peggy is, but Peggy says that families are all like that. Billy is awful. I do not think I like him very much. He says the queerest words and acts rude and rough. Tante would not like his manners at all. I am ashamed becose I do not like him becose Auntie loves him dearly and she only laughs when I think she will punish him; he does not read books and his English is bad like Dinah's and he teses Peggy and Alice and eats very fast and talks with food in his mouth. I shall try to like him.

There are no sidewalks at Mr. Lee's house; they have pebble paths with flowers here instead of sidewalks and a dirt road; it is just like the real country and there are daisies in the fields, Peggy says they do not call them lots. The grass is greener than in the Square at home. All the children have gardens. Peggy says I may have half of her's and I have a hoe and rake all my own. Billy

is going to sell his vegertables becose he wants to buy a new sending set for his wireless. I like the pony, though I do not like to ride it after the first time when I fell off, though it did not hurt me at all and I was not even frightened.

To-morrow we are going into the lake for a swim, although I will have to learn, but Peggy says that it is easy only I must stay away from Billy or he will duck me. I shall try and not be afraid becose I am sure you would be ashamed of me if I acted frightened. It will be fun to put on my new bathing suit. Auntie taught Barbara and Peggy to swim. Peggy is going to try and win the medal this year, and Barbara says she will becose she swims so well.

I will try and remember to write to Aunt Josephine like I promised I would becose she is my aunt, but I will not know what to tell her becose there is not anything in Overlook that is like what she has and she might not like what I tell her and scold us. I am sure she would be angry if I told her that once a week Auntie lets us girls cook the supper and we cook just what we please and surprise them, and Barbara puts down on a paper everything we use and how much it costs, and after supper she gives it to Mr. Lee and we talk about it. To-morrow is our night. Oh I wish you were here, Daddy, it is such fun only it is very lonely without a father. I try to do all the things that Peggy does, though I can't do them as well, but I will tell you in this diry how I improve as I intend to do. I have not any book to keep my

thoughts in, but I will send them to you whenever I write them. Please excuse my spelling for I am sure no one should have to look in a dickshunary when they are writing thoughts. Tante never did. I love you and I am sending a million kisses with this letter.

Your little soldier daugghter,

Keineth Randolph.

* * * * *

Dear Mr. President of the United States:

Please send the letter I put in the envelope to my father. He is working for the Stars and Stripes somewhere, he said he could not tell me where becose it was a secret. He is a soldier, but he is one of those that do not wear any uniform. I am sure you will know where he is becose you are the President of our Country. I would like to know, too, very much where he is becose it is lonesome without him, for my father is the only family I have. But my father said I must be a little soldier. You know he just means me to do my duty and to like Overlook and everybody and to do what they do, but it makes me feel better to pretend that I am a soldier like he is and like all your soldiers. Thank you if you send my letter to my father and much love.

Yours truly,

Keineth Randolph.

P. S.—Aunt Josephine says postscripts are not good form, but I forgot to say that my father's name is John Randolph, of Washington Square, New York.

This was the letter over which Keineth, curled in a chair at the writing-desk, had labored for a long time, finishing it at last to her satisfaction. Slipping it into an envelope with the letter she had written to her father she sealed it hastily, anxious to have it addressed and mailed before Peggy and Billy returned from the golf club.

Over on the window seat Barbara sat sewing, watching Keineth with amused eyes; for Keineth had been writing with the dictionary open at her elbow and had stopped very often to consult it as to the spelling of a word.

"Very different from Peggy," thought Barbara.

Aware after a little that Keineth's face wore a perplexed frown, she said to her:

"Can I help you, Ken?"

"If you'll just tell me how to address a letter to the President, please."

"The President! What President?"

"The President of the United States."

"Good gracious——" Barbara, dropping her sewing, stared at Keineth in amazement. "I thought —no wonder you're using a dictionary! I am sure I would, too! But——"

Keineth broke in hastily. "You see I have been writing a sort of diary, about everything I think and do, to send to my father, but I don't know where he is because he has gone away on a mission for our country and it has to be kept a secret, but I thought——" Her voice broke a little and she held the letter tightly in her hands.

Barbara, feeling how close the tears were to Keineth's bright eyes, crossed quickly to her side.

"Oh, I see!" she said briskly. "What a splendid idea! Of course the President will know where he is and will send it to him. Let me think—we learned all that in school and had to address make-believe letters to him——" Taking a sheet of paper she wrote in large letters:

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,
White House,
Washington, D. C.

"It looks too simple for the President—it ought to have more flourishes to it and titles and things, shouldn't it, Ken? You copy it and we'll walk straight down to the post office and mail it so that it will go on to-night's train."

Tears were far from Keineth's eyes as she walked by Barbara's side down the white road between the fields of daisies and buttercups. The little cloud of loneliness that had for a brief time threatened her sky had disappeared and she was again a light-hearted little girl, eagerly awaiting the happy things that each new day at Overlook seemed to bring to her.

CHAPTER V

PILOT COMES TO OVERLOOK

"THIS is the third time in a week that Billy's been late for dinner," said Mrs. Lee, looking from Billy's empty place at the table to his father's face.

Mr. Lee was serving the steaming chicken and biscuits that Nora had placed on the table.

"He asked me if he could go to the fair at Middletown! He wanted his next week's allowance."

"William," and Mrs. Lee's gentle voice was stern, "you do spoil that boy dreadfully!"

"He's with Jim Archer!" Peggy put in. She knew that her mother did not like Jim Archer.

"Billy's with him a lot," added Barbara.

"He teases us girls all the time, too, Mother! He put June bugs in my bed last night!" cried Alice.

"Billy is certainly in all wrong just now," answered Mr. Lee with a twinkle in his eyes.

"But *do* you think these fairs are quite the places for boys like Billy and Jim Archer—alone?"

asked Mrs. Lee with a troubled look. "He should have been home long ago! They must have ridden their wheels!"

"Don't worry, little mother! Billy will come home tired and hungry and none the worse for the fair! Why, when I was a boy I never missed a fair anywhere around and always walked, too! *They* used to be real fairs—nothing like them these days!"

The children knew that when their father began his "when I was a boy," it could mean a story if there was a little coaxing!

"Oh, tell us a story!" Alice cried.

"Please do!" added Keineth. It would make them all forget to feel cross toward Billy!

So, chuckling a little under his breath, Mr. Lee began:

"Down in our village old Cy Addington had a calf he'd entered in the County Fair. He'd set his heart on that calf's winning a prize—all the other farmers had told him it would. It was black as jet with just a little white mark on its fore quarter. He tended that calf like a baby and spent hours at a time getting it all in shape for the Fair. Well, the night before the Fair opened two boys—bad boys

they were—stole that calf out of its shed, took it off in some woods where they had a lantern and a can of paint hidden under a log. What do you think they did? Painted the animal white—snow white—every bit of him! Then they took him to the graveyard and tied him to a tombstone!"

"Oh, Daddy, how dreadful!" cried Alice.

"Then what happened?" demanded Keineth and Peggy in one voice.

"Well, a lot of things happened, and they happened fast! Miss Cymantha Jones, a nervous spinster, was walking home from Widow Markham's house—rather late, but she'd been caring for the widow through a sick spell. And Miss Cymantha saw that calf jumping around among the tombstones and thought it was a ghost! She let out such screams that it brought Charley, the old sexton, running to the door in his night shirt, and he saw the calf, and Miss Cymantha scuttling down the road screaming and holding her skirts high so's she could run faster, and I guess he thought it was the resurrection itself, for what did he do but ring the bell and the folks all thought it was a fire and came rushing out in all kinds of clothes! Then Cy Ad-

dington found his precious calf and the neighbors had an indignation meeting right then and there and the ones who had the most clothes on started out to find the offenders and some of the others went in to quiet Miss Cymantha, and a few others put the sexton to bed and locked him in so that he couldn't give any more alarms!"

"But what happened to the boys?"

"Oh, when the crowd was the most excited they just climbed over a woodshed into the house and by the time the volunteers were lined up to go to find them they were sound asleep!"

"Who were they, Father? Were they boys you knew?" asked Peggy.

Mr. Lee laughed down the length of the table and Peggy caught the answering smile in her mother's eyes.

"Oh, I know—I know! It was you, Daddy," she cried, running from her chair to kiss the back of his head.

"Come, dear, sit down! William, if you were that sort of a boy what can we expect of Billy? Hark—isn't that his whistle?"

She stepped eagerly to the door, the girls close behind her.

"He's all right—he always whistles when he's happy!"

"It is he!" cried Mrs. Lee, going down the steps. "And what in the world is he bringing with him!"

For Billy, covered with dust, guiding his bicycle with one hand, was walking leisurely up the road leading with an air of pride edged slightly by a disturbing doubt, a dirty, weary-eyed dog!

"A dog—of all things!" cried Barbara.

"*Where'd* you get it?" demanded Peggy eagerly.

The family stood on the bottom step and eyed Billy's treasure. The dog seemed to have no doubt as to his welcome, for in his desire to greet his adopted family he strained at the slender leash with which Billy held him.

"Whose dog is it, Billy," asked Mrs. Lee.

"I bought him for a dollar!" Billy glanced questioningly at his mother. He had heard her declare ever so often that she would not allow a long-haired dog in the house! And this new pet had a very long, shaggy, dirty hide!

Peggy was on her knees with both arms around the dog's neck.

"Just see him shake hands!" Alice was crying.

But the quiet of Mrs. Lee's manner disturbed Billy. "I think you'd better come into the house and see if Nora has saved you any supper. After you have finished we will hear about the dog."

"Let me hold him, please, Billy!" begged Peggy. Keineth stood a little apart. She was not yet sure that she wanted a closer acquaintance with the newcomer. She had known few dogs; her father had always warned her to leave the stray dogs that she met on the street quite alone—and she had detested Aunt Josephine's silky poodle! But this poor scrap was wagging his stubby tail and looking at her in a coaxing manner that said plainly, "Let's be friends!"

Within the house Billy was cramming down biscuits and chicken gravy with an enjoyment that covered the concern he felt at his mother's attitude. When he could speak for the food in his mouth he told her of the crowds at the fair. But with the last mouthful of custard pie bolted he went straight to the point:

"Can I keep him, Mother?"

She rose and, with Billy following, went out upon the veranda. At sight of his new master the dog broke away from Peggy and leaped upon him, his big paws on Billy's shoulders.

"Can't I keep him, Mummy?" he asked, pleadingly, looking from his mother to his father.

"Mummy, this is such a lovely dog——" implored Alice, the June bugs forgotten.

"And we'll take care of him," added Peggy.

Billy put one arm around the dog's neck.

"I guess when you hear the story 'bout him you'll let him stay," he said solemnly.

"Tell us, son," Mr. Lee joined in for the first time.

So Billy stood before them to plead for his dog.

"Jim and I got to the Fair, 'nd he told me to wait outside and he'd scout around and see if he couldn't find his uncle who had a show inside, 'cause Jim thought maybe his uncle could get us in for nothing and we'd have more money to spend. It was awful hot and I went over and sat under the trees across the road and watched the people come. All of a sudden I heard a dog cry, and over near one

of the other trees was a man that looked like a tramp trying to make a dog go ahead and kicking him awful 'cause the dog wouldn't go! The dog would cry and then the man'd kick him again and swear awful. Well, I was mad—I gave that whistle that Rex used to know and the dog sort of listened, then I whistled harder and the dog made a jump and broke his string and ran like a flash right to me just's if he knew I was a friend! The man came after him, swearing harder than ever. But I just took the dog and stood right up and I said to him: 'You don't know how to treat a dog!' I thought maybe he'd hit me, he looked so mad, but I went on talking real fast. I said, 'He's a lot like a dog I know—what'll you sell him for?' Because I'd sort o' decided he'd stolen him and might be glad to get rid of him, you see! And the man said, 'How much'll you give?' and I told him I'd give a dollar, and he reached out for the string and said, 'That ain't enough,' and I said, 'That's all I've got,' and just that minute a policeman came along towards us and he said quick, 'He's yours,' and I gave him my dollar and you ought to have seen him beat it!"

Upon the rest of the story Billy touched lightly—

how, his dollar gone, he had had no money with which to buy his way into the fair; how Jim, returning from an unsuccessful search for the uncle and finding Billy and the dog under the tree, had, disgusted by Billy's extravagance, left him there, bidding him wait! But later Jim had relented and had treated Billy to an ice-cream cone from the tent near the gate. Then Jim had started for home and Billy had walked the five miles between Middletown and Overlook, pushing the bicycle and leading the tired dog.

"And I never saw the Fair at all," he finished, breathless from his story.

"Well, Mother—don't you think Billy deserves the dog?" said Mr. Lee when Billy had finished. And Keineth whispered, "Goody, goody!"

Mrs. Lee laughed. "I will say that he may stay here on trial—while we're in the country. But, oh, dear—I had hoped we'd never have another dog—and of all things, a long-haired dog!"

"Jim Archer said he was an Airedale," broke in Billy, proudly stroking the dirty head. "Pretty cheap for a dollar, I think!"

"Let's name him," cried Alice eagerly.

"I think you'd better bathe him first," chuckled Mr. Lee. Then, turning to his wife, "You know I think it is a valuable dog! The fellow must have stolen him!"

In triumph Billy and Peggy led the newcomer towards the pump for his bath, while Keineth went in search of soap and a sponge. Over the bath they discussed names and, as it looked as though they could not agree, they decided that, because Keineth was a visitor, she should select the name.

And after a little thought she called him Pilot.

"Pilot Lee," said Peggy, squeezing a spongeful of water over the dog's head.

An hour later a very tired boy was sleeping soundly, while on the floor beside his cot lay the dog—his warm muzzle faithfully snuggled against Billy's dusty shoe.

CHAPTER VI

THE MUSIC THE FAIRIES PUT IN HER FINGERS

On the shaded corner of the wide veranda Mrs. Lee sat making buttonholes in a blouse for Billy, humming as she worked. Occasionally she patted the crisp cloth in her hand as though she loved this task of stitching for her youngsters. About her quiet reigned; broken now and then by Peggy's bird in its cage and the far-off sound of the gasoline mower on the golf course.

Suddenly Barbara came around the corner of the house, like a rose, in her fresh pink gingham. In her hand she swung a putter.

"Off for the golf links, dear?" Mrs. Lee asked, glancing with pride over the straight, slim figure of the girl.

"Yes, Mother, Carol Day and I play off our match this afternoon. If I beat her I'll win those candlesticks——"

"They will look very pretty on your dresser," smiled Mrs. Lee.

"I know what you mean, Mother—that I'm just playing for the candlesticks alone and I'm not at all, for when I do win one I sort of hate taking a prize. But I would like to beat Carol because she does play such a good game!"

"That's the spirit, Bab. Where are the little girls?"

"That's what I wanted to talk to you about, Mother." Barbara, balancing herself on the arm of a chair, tapped her toe with the putter. "Peggy and Alice have gone off to Molly Sawyer's and they've left Keineth home. I don't think they're treating her a bit nicely!"

"Why didn't she go with them?"

"I don't think Peggy asked her to go. She and Molly were going to play tennis on the Sawyer courts with Joan Crate, a girl that's out here from town, and Keineth felt left out. Peggy told her she couldn't play well enough to play with them and that it spoiled a game playing with beginners, anyway!"

Mrs. Lee stitched in silence. Barbara went on:

"And I heard Billy the other day teasing her about her father. He laughed at her when she said

her father was a soldier, only the kind that didn't wear a uniform, and he told her there weren't any soldiers like that! I think you ought to speak to the children, Mother."

"Never mind, Bab, those things will straighten themselves. Peggy must be more considerate and patient and I will tell Billy something about Keineth's father—Billy will be interested. We may some day have reason to be very proud of knowing him, for he may become a very great man, besides doing an immense good for this country of ours. Run along, dear, to your game and good luck to you!"

Barbara kissed the top of her head and hurried away. Mrs. Lee sat on alone, her hands idly clasped over the blouse in her lap. It was her way to puzzle out these little problems quietly.

Suddenly across the June stillness came the sound of exquisite music; clear, thrilling notes, unreal—fairylike! Almost hesitatingly Mrs. Lee turned as though she expected to see a fairy sprite in gauzy robes approaching her from the shadows of the house! She rose and crept toward the window. No sprite was there—only Keineth sitting before the piano, her small hands softly touching the keys as

though by magic she drew the melody from them. Across her fair head fell a slanting bar of sunlight. To this her eyes were raised in rapt contentment.

From the window Mrs. Lee watched and listened. There seemed to be no beginning or end to the melody—it ran on and on, now plaintive, like a small voice crying—now full of laughter with a happy note like that of a bird.

"Child——" Mrs. Lee stepped through the long window into the room. Keineth turned quickly.

"I didn't know—anyone was here," she said, shyly.

But Mrs. Lee scarcely heard her. She had clasped her arms about the small form and was holding it very close.

"I was just playing—what the fairies put in my fingers," Keineth explained from the depths of Mrs. Lee's embrace.

"They are fairy fingers indeed," laughed Mrs. Lee. "Let us sit down here together and you must tell me all about it. Who taught you to play like that, child?"

"No one—like that. Madame Henri always gave me lessons. They were very stupid and I hated

having to practice. But every evening, when we'd sit together, I'd play to Daddy the music that came into my fingers. Sometimes he'd stand by the piano until I was finished and then he'd kiss my fingers and say 'fairy fingers,' only Tante used to snore so loudly, poor thing."

"And you love music?"

"Oh—most of anything in the world. Sometimes Daddy would take me to the big opera house to hear music and it seemed, when I heard it, as though I was floating right away. Then we'd go home and I'd make up more music and tell them a story on the piano and sometimes Daddy could guess the story almost. Tante used to shake her head and Daddy would say, 'Leave her alone—she knows more than we do.' I don't know what he meant, but some day I shall study hard and try to be a great musician. Daddy said—I should—only he said I must wait until my body grew as strong as my spirit."

"Keineth, my dear, do you know what a precious trust has been given you? God gives to some of His children great gifts—they are in trust for Him! You must care for it and guard it and keep it and

see that it is bestowed generously upon many! Music is one of the most precious things in this world—and to create it is a great power!"

Keineth, with puzzled eyes, tried to understand. Mrs. Lee patted her hand.

"How your mother would have loved to hear what these fingers can do! She had a nature that was like a song in its sweetness. But your father is right; before all else you must build up this little body of yours!"

"What did he mean, Aunt Nellie?"

"He wants you to run and play games and grow strong. And you must not be discouraged and unhappy if you can't keep up just yet with Peggy and Billy and the others. Remember, while they've been racing their legs off you've been doing other things. If Peggy *can* beat you at tennis, you just ask her to play one of her pieces for you! Poor Peg, her fingers are all thumbs! Everything evens up in this funny world, child."

"You're so wonderful, Aunt Nellie! I did feel as if Peggy didn't like me because I couldn't do things as well as she can, but if she'll help me learn

to swim real well and beat Billy just once at tennis, I'll help her with her music!"

"A fine idea, Keineth! And then sometimes, when Peggy perhaps wants to do something that you don't care about, I will help you write down the music you play. Some day we will surprise them all—you and I will have a secret!"

Keineth clapped her hands eagerly. "Oh, I have wished I could! It'll be such fun! I'll send it to my father! You *are* wonderful, Aunt Nellie." The child threw her arms about Mrs. Lee's neck in a burst of joy.

"Remember, now! No discouraged heart because you can't get a ball over the net or stand on your head in the water!"

That evening an east wind blowing up with a fine, driving rain, gave an excuse for a fire in the big fireplace. And as they sat around it; Alice on the arm of her mother's chair, Barbara close to her father, a little silent, because Carol Day *had* beaten her; Peggy and Keineth on the floor side by side, and Billy and his dog sprawled near the door, Mrs. Lee told the children the story of the little boy who went each day to his attic room to play on the old

piano there; how one day, the sound of the music reaching the ears of people below, they crept one by one to the dark stairway to listen. Then in wonder they brought others and even more. These foolish folk thought it was a spirit who came to the attic room and made the music, but finally one of them crept closer and opened the door and found the little boy!

"I know, Mother," cried Barbara, "it was Mozart!"

"Yes, it was Mozart, who, when he grew older, made music that will last as long as this world. Keineth, will you play for us, dear?"

Keineth, with a very red face, walked bravely to the piano. But her heart was happy and her fingers tingled with the music she felt. With the firelight dancing across the darkened room it seemed like the old library at home and as if Daddy *must* be sitting close to her with Madame Henri nodding in her chair near the window!

They were silent when she had finished. Barbara sighed—as though the music had made her sad; Billy said something under his breath that sounded like "Gee!" and Mrs. Lee patted Peggy's hand. She

had found time for a little talk with Peggy about Keineth.

"Oh, I think you're wonderful!" Peggy cried now to Keineth, running to her and linking her hand in Keineth's arm. "I wish I could play one bit as well as that——"

After the children had gone to bed Mr. and Mrs. Lee sat for a long time in the room lighted only by the flames of the fire. Somehow the music seemed to linger about them.

"Isn't this world funny, William——" Mrs. Lee stared into the blaze. "If that child had not lived that funny, lonely life in that big house with no one but the queer governess, that gift of hers might never have developed! I wonder what the future may have in store for her?"

"Above all—let us hope—health and happiness!"

CHAPTER VII

ALICE RUNS AWAY

"I've got something to show you all," Billy announced at the luncheon table. He wore the satisfied air of one who has accomplished something long desired.

"What've you got?" Peggy answered promptly.

"Guess!" Billy fixed his attention upon his plate in a tantalizing way.

"Oh, I know—it's a new sending set! I guessed first!"

"You didn't guess, either! I'll bet you saw Joe Cary bring it!"

"What is a sending set?" asked Keineth.

"I'll show you afterwards," Billy answered, with a kindness meant to crush Peggy.

Mr. Lee broke in: "But I thought you had to save three dollars more before you could buy one——"

Billy flushed. "Well, this ain't exactly mine—yet, Dad! Joe Cary made it and he's going to make

another and he says I can use this one until I want to buy it or at least for a while. I have that dollar I was saving and my onions and radishes."

"Good gracious!" Barbara laughed, "I suppose we'll live on onions and radishes three times a day."

Mr. Lee turned to Billy. "Don't you think, son, it might be better to wait until you have the money to pay Joe? And a little more practice?"

"Billy's always spending money on all those foolish things," Barbara put in. "He doesn't seem to want to save and help you!"

"Well, say, don't you think those things are foolish! You read all sorts of things how wireless messages save people——"

"On sinking ships, yes!"

"Well, lots of other ways, too!" Billy's face blazed with wrath. "I'll just show you some time!"

"Molly Sawyer's brother knows a boy who is a wireless operator in the Canadian Army and sends messages from trees!"

"And if I have a little more practice I can try the troop exams next winter and get a certificate!"

"Billy," broke in his mother, "run over to Mrs.

Clark's and tell Alice to come home at once. Nora rang the bell for her but she did not hear."

"Why, Mother," said Peggy, suddenly alarmed, "Janet Clark was with us this morning!"

Janet Clark was Alice's closest playmate. The two families lived in adjoining houses. Mrs. Lee had returned to the house at noon and Nora had told her that she had last seen Alice running through the gate between the two gardens.

It was only a worried moment before Billy came home to say that Alice had not been there that morning! It was not like Alice to be long away from home. Mrs. Lee, hiding her concern, directed the children to scour the neighborhood.

Not until they had come back from the club and beach and neighboring houses and reported no sign of her did the mother and father openly express alarm. The children saw a look come into their mother's face that it had never worn before! Like a shock its agony pierced into each child's heart! Very white, Billy rushed off to enlist the services of his boy friends for a thorough search of the beach. Barbara, with her father, started in the motor for Middletown.

"I will stay here near the telephone," Mrs. Lee had said in answer to her husband's quick, concerned look.

Peggy came running down the stairs.

"Her bathing suit is gone, Mammy, and her pink apron——"

"And her penny bank is broken!" Keineth held out in her hands the pieces of the china pig which had held Alice's collection of pennies. "It's all broken!" and, miserably, Keineth looked down at the fragments.

"We will find her," said Mrs. Lee, bravely, putting an arm about each child. "You girlies must stay with me and help me."

From Middletown Mr. Lee telephoned that they had found a clue. A child answering Alice's description had stopped at a small candy store and had purchased a selection of lolly-pops. She had paid for them in pennies. Someone in the store had seen her climb upon a trolley car bound for the city. Mr. Lee and Barbara were going on to the city.

But at dusk they returned with no further news. In the crowd at the city station no one had seen the

child! And Billy and his boy friends had found no trace upon the beach!

"The police are working," the children heard their father say. Then Mrs. Lee suddenly sank limp against his arm and he led her away.

"Courage — courage!" they heard him whispering.

Nora laid a tempting meal upon the table and carried it away, for no one could eat a mouthful. Peggy had run to her room, where Keineth found her—her face buried deep in her pillow.

"Oh," she sobbed, "I've been so mean to Allie lots of times and maybe she's dead somewhere and I can't ever tell her——"

Keineth could offer small comfort, but the two locked their arms tight about one another and listened as though in the gathering darkness they might hear Alice's dear voice.

Mr. Lee had rushed off again to the city after a whispered word to Barbara to stay close to her mother. Billy, his heart breaking, his eyes burning with the tears which his boyish pride would not allow him to show, and feeling the bitterness of his youth and his uselessness, slowly mounted the stairs

to the corner of the attic which was his own particular den. The nickel of his beloved wireless apparatus gleamed at him through the darkness. Like a flash a hope sprang into his heart! Snatching up the phone he placed it upon his head, then ticked off his message, with call after call, in every direction!

Now and then someone picked up his words—an unsatisfactory answer would come back. However, finding relief in doing something, Billy repeated his calls; listening intently for any answer.

Just as to his mind vividly came the picture of Alice's hurt face, when, that very morning, he had roughly taken from her his old stamp book, his own call came through the air. Every nerve in his body tingled a response! It was Freddie Murdock—they had often talked back and forth across the lake from where, on the Canadian shore, Freddie Murdock's father had a cottage. And the words that Freddie was sending to him by the waves of the air were: "Sister found—all right!"

Shouting the good news Billy rushed three steps at a time down the stairs straight into his mother's arms! She clung to him, burying the boy's face,

down which the tears were streaming, close to her heart.

And while they clung together, crying and half laughing, Barbara reached her father on the telephone to tell him how Alice had been found!

Two hours later Genevieve brought the little truant home. Mrs. Lee carried her off for a warm bath and bed, while Nora, her eyes very red with weeping, fixed her a bowl of hot milk toast.

"I coaxed the story from her," Mr. Lee told his wife and Barbara later; "that child wanted to see Midway Beach! Do you remember how hard she begged to go with the Clarks when they went over and how unreasonable she thought we were in refusing? Well, she just made up her mind to go alone. She took her bathing suit and her pennies. She walked from here to Middletown, took the trolley there for the city. On the trolley she saw a party of picnickers headed for Midway Beach and she just walked along with them. It was very simple. She watched the merry-go-rounds and spent all her pennies! When it began to grow dark she laid down on the beach and fell asleep. They found her there, later, after young Murdock had

given the alarm of a child lost! She didn't seem to be frightened until they handed her over to a policeman to take her back to the city; then the seriousness of her runaway must have come to her. I do not think you will have to worry that she will do it again."

Up in her cot Alice lay wide awake. Beside her Peggy and Keineth, exhausted by their anxiety, were breathing heavily. Below Alice could hear voices that she knew were her father's and mother's. She wished awfully that her mother would come to her! With a child's instinct she had read on her mother's face the suffering she had caused. Suddenly she felt terribly alone—perhaps none of them would love her now or want her back. She had been so very, very naughty. She clutched the blanket with frightened fingers.

The voices ceased below and in a moment Alice saw her mother's face bending over her. With a little cry she threw her arms about the dear neck.

"Oh, Mammy, Mammy," she cried, in a passion of sobs, "say you love me—say you want me back! I don't ever, ever, ever want to go away alone! I thought it would be fun—I didn't think I was so

naughty. Hold me close, Mammy——" exhausted, she hid her face.

"Oh, my dear—my baby," the mother breathed in comfort and forgiveness, and the loving arms did not relax their hold until the child was fast asleep.

"I think, Billy," said Mr. Lee, the next morning, "the family will present to you with their compliments the finest sending set we can find!"

"And aren't they useful?" Billy cried in just triumph.

CHAPTER VIII

A PAGE FROM HISTORY

For several days a peaceful quiet reigned at Overlook. Little Alice dogged her mother's footsteps, as though she could not bear one moment's separation; Barbara spent the greater part of her time at the golf club, coming home each day glowing with enthusiasm over the game and fired with a hope of winning the women's championship title. Billy had no thought for anything but the new sending set which his father had ordered for him and which Joe Cary was helping him to install. Keineth, under Peggy's tutorage, was faithfully practicing at tennis, spending much time volleying balls back and forth across the net and trying to understand the technic of the game. Then each afternoon came a delicious dip into the lake, when Mrs. Lee would patiently instruct Keineth in swimming. They were gloriously happy days—seeming very care-free after the hours of agonizing concern over Alice; days that

brought new color into the young faces and an added glow into the bright eyes.

"Does Keineth know how we spend the Fourth of July?" Billy asked one evening.

"I hate firecrackers!" Keineth shuddered. "We always went away over the Fourth to a little place out on Long Island."

"We just have balloons and Roman candles in the evening because they are not dangerous," Peggy explained.

"And then on the Fourth we always make our visit to Grandma Sparks."

"Who is she?" asked Keineth. She had never heard them speak of Grandma Sparks.

"Father calls her a page out of history."

"Every man that had ever lived in her family has served his country——"

"She isn't really our grandmother. Just a dear friend."

Barbara explained further: "She has the most interesting little old home about two miles from here. Part of it is over one hundred years old! She lives there all alone. And her house is filled with the most wonderful furniture—queer chairs

and great big beds with posts that go to the ceiling and one has to step on little stepladders to get into them, only no one ever does because she lives there all alone. She has some plates that Lafayette ate from and a cup that George Washington drank out of——"

"And the funniest toys—a doll that belonged to her grandmother and is made of wood and painted, with a queer silk dress, all ruffles! She always lets me play with it."

"And her great-great-grandmother, when she was a little girl, held an arch with some other children, at Trenton, for Washington to pass through when he went by horse to New York for his first inauguration. They all wore white and the arch was covered with roses. Grandma Sparks loves to tell of it and how Washington patted her great-great-grandmother on the head! If you ask her to tell you the story she will be very happy, Keineth."

"I like her guns best——" cried Billy. "She's got all kinds of guns and things they used way back in the Revolution!"

"And she has a roomful of books and letters

from great people that her ancestors collected. Why, Father says that she would be very rich if she'd sell the papers she has, but she will not part with a thing! Mother says she just lives in the past and she'd rather starve than to take money for one of her relics!"

"I'd rather have the money, you bet," muttered Billy.

"I wouldn't—I think it must be wonderful to have a letter that was really written and signed by President Lincoln himself," Barbara declared.

"I'm awfully glad we're going there," said Keineth eagerly.

"Let's ask her to tell us about how her brother dug his way out of Andersonville Prison! She'll show us the broken knife, Ken!"

"Why, Billy, she's told us that story dozens of times—let's ask for a new one!" To Keineth: "After she gives us gingerbread and milk and little tarts she tells us a story while we all sit under the apple tree!"

"And say, she can make the best tarts!" interrupted Billy.

"Oh, I wish the Fourth would *hurry* and come!" echoed Keineth.

It did come—a glorious sunny morning! Billy's bugle wakened them at a very early hour. Before breakfast the children, with Mr. and Mrs. Lee, circled about the flag pole on the lawn, and, while Billy slowly pulled the Stars and Stripes to the top, in chorus they repeated the oath of allegiance to their flag. Keineth—her eyes turned upward, suddenly felt a rush of loneliness for her father. A little prayer formed on her lips to the flag she was honoring. "Please take care of him wherever he is!"

At noon, in Genevieve, they started merrily off for Grandma Sparks! In her mind Keineth had drawn a picture of a stately Colonial house, with great pillars, such as she had sometimes seen while driving with Aunt Josephine. Great was her surprise when Billy turned into a grass-grown driveway which led past a broken-down gate and stopped at the door of a weather-gray house; its walls almost concealed by the vines growing from ground to gable and even rambling over the patched roof. At

the door of the house stood a noble apple tree, spreading its branches in loving protection over the old stone steps which led to the threshold.

Through the small-paned window Grandma Sparks had been watching for them. She came out quickly; a tiny figure in a dress as gray and weather-beaten as the house itself, a cap covering her white head. Her hands were stretched out in eager welcome and her smile seemed to embrace them all at once.

"Well—well—well," was all she could say.

Keineth felt suddenly as though this quaint little lady had indeed stepped out of one of her own dusty old books—she could not be a part, possibly, of their busy world! And while the others talked she examined, with unconcealed interest, the queer heavy furniture, the colored prints on the walls and the old spinnet in the corner. Billy was already taking down the guns and Alice sat rocking the doll.

Keineth was shown the picture of the great-great-grandmother who had held the arch and was told the story; she saw the plates and the cup and the broken knife. They unfolded the flags that had

been in the family for generations and reread the letters that Mrs. Sparks kept in a heavy mahogany box. One of them—most treasured of all—had been written to her mother in praise of her brother's bravery on the battlefield under action, and was signed "A. Lincoln."

"My greatest grief in life," the little old lady said, holding the letter close to her heart, "is that I have no son who may for his generation serve his country, if they need him!"

Afterwards Barbara told Keineth that Mrs. Sparks had once had a little boy who had been born a cripple and died when he was twelve years old.

While Barbara and Peggy were busy spreading a picnic table under the apple tree, Keineth told Grandma Sparks of her own father and how he had gone away to serve his country, too; but that it was a secret and no one knew he was a soldier because he wore no uniform.

"The truest hearts aren't always under a uniform, my dear," and the old lady patted Keineth's hand. "The service that is done quietly and with no beating of drums is the hardest service to do!"

After the picnic—and the picnic *had* included the gingerbread and tarts and patties that Barbara had described and which the dear old lady had spent hours in preparing—they grouped themselves under the apple tree; Grandma in the old rocker Billy had brought from the house.

"Not about Andersonville, please," begged Peggy. "Why, I know that by heart! A new one!"

"Something about the war," Billy urged.

Barbara interrupted, shuddering. "No—no! I can't bear to think there is a war right now——"

"Child—I had thought that never again in my lifetime would this world know a war! We have much to learn, yet—we are not ready for a lasting peace. But it will come!"

"That's what my father says—we must all learn to live like families in a nice street," added Keineth gravely.

"Oh, well—if the girls can't stand a story about the war, tell us something about the early settlers! I like adventure—if I'd lived in those days you bet I'd have discovered something!"

"I remember," mused the old lady, "a story my father used to tell! We have the papers about it somewhere. Let me think—it was about a trading post on the Ohio and a captive maiden brought there by the Indians!"

Billy threw his cap in the air.

"Indians! Hooray!"

CHAPTER IX

THE CAPTIVE MAIDEN

GRANDMA SPARKS folded her hands contentedly in her lap and fastened her eyes upon the distant tree-tops.

"Years and years ago, when this land was a vast forest, a band of Canadian and French soldiers and traders made their way through the wilderness to the banks of the Ohio where they built a small fort and started a trading post. The land was rich about them and they were soon carrying on a prosperous trade with the Indians who came to the fort. Though these Indians were friendly the soldiers had made the fort as strong as possible, for they knew that no one could tell at what moment they might be attacked! Sometimes weeks and months would pass when no Indian would come their way; then some of the traders would journey back along the trail with their wealth, leaving the others at the fort to guard it.

"In their number was a soldier who had once

escaped from England; had gone into France and from there to Canada, all because he had made the King angry! Everyone in England thought he was dead. After years of lonely wandering he had joined the little band of adventurers when they started for the West—as they called it in those days! He was a queer man, for he seldom talked to his fellows, but they knew he was brave and would give up his life for any one of them! They called him Robert—no one knew his other name, nor ever asked.

"It was the custom at the trading post to treat the Indians with great politeness. Sometimes great chiefs came to the fort and then the soldiers and traders acted as though they were entertaining the King of England.

"One early morning a sentry called out to his fellows that Indians were approaching. The soldiers quickly made all preparations for their reception. The commanding officer went forward with some of his men to meet them. The Indian band was led by a chief—a great, tall fellow with a kingly bearing, and behind him another Indian carried in his arms the limp form of a white girl.

"Briefly the chief explained that the girl was hurt; that they, the white men, must care for her! Where they had found her—what horrible things might have happened before they made her captive no one could know, for an Indian never tells and the white men knew better than to ask! The girl was carried into shelter and laid upon a rough wooden bed. It was Robert, the outlaw, who helped unwind the covers that bound her.

"In astonishment the soldiers beheld the face of a beautiful girl—waxen white in her unconsciousness. Silently the Indians let the white medicine-man care for their captive. She had been so terribly hurt that for days she lay as though dead! While the soldiers entertained the Indians, the medicine-man and Robert worked night and day to save the young life.

"Having finished trading with the white men the Indians prepared to return to their village, which, they told the white men, was far away toward the setting sun. The girl was too ill to be moved; so, with a few words, the Indian Chief told the officer of the fort that soon they would return for the girl—whom he claimed as his squaw—and that if ill befell

her, or, on their return, she was gone—a dozen scalps he would take in turn! The officer could do no more than promise that the Indian's captive would be well guarded.

"And every white man of them knew that as surely as the sun sets the Indian would return for the girl whom he claimed as his squaw, and that if she was not there for him to take, twelve of them would pay with their lives!

" The weeks went on and the girl grew well and strong, but, because of her horrible accident, could remember nothing of her past. She was like an angel to the rough traders and soldiers; going about among them in the simple robe they had fashioned for her of skins and sacking, with her fair hair lying over her shoulders and her eyes as blue as the very sky. And because she could not tell them her name they called her Angele.

" One day a message was brought to their fort telling of war in the Colonies—that the English were fighting the French and that all Canada would be swept with flame and blood! Almost to a man they said they would go back to fight. One among them did not speak—it was Robert! Though he had fled

from England never to return, he could not lift his hand against her. And someone must stay with Angele!

" By the camp fire they talked it over. It was decided that four of them would remain at the fort until the chieftain came to claim his captive. One of these would be Robert; the other three would be chosen by lot.

" So while the others went home along the trail over which they had come, the four guarded the little fort for Angele's sake. Three of them gave little thought to that time when the Indian chief would come for the girl—to them it simply meant that their guard would be ended and that they, too, might return—but Robert went about with a heavy heart, for, as the days passed, it seemed to him more and more impossible to give the girl into a life of bondage! Under the stars he vowed that before he would do that he would run his knife deep into her heart, and pay with his own life.

"Angele's contentment was terribly shattered one evening when, at sundown, three Indians came to the fort. At the sight of them she uttered a terrible scream and fled into hiding. They said they

had been wandering over the country and had come to the fort quite by chance and only sought a friendly shelter for the night, but the sight of their brown bodies and dark faces had shocked the girl's mind in such a way as to bring back the memory of everything that had happened to her and hers at the hands of these red men. Robert found her crouched in a corner weeping in terror. To him she told her story; how the little band of people, once happy families in the land of Acadia, roaming in search of a home, had been surprised by an attack of Indians; how before her very eyes every soul of them had been killed and she alone had been spared because the chief wanted her for his squaw! They had carried her away with them; for days they had travelled through strange forests, for hours at a time she was scarcely conscious. Then, attempting escape, she had received the blow from a tomahawk that had hurt her so cruelly. It was a terrible story. Robert listened to the end and then, taking her two hands and holding them close to his heart, told her solemnly that never would she be given again to the Indians!

" But he did not tell her of his vow, for suddenly he knew that life would be very, very happy if he

could escape from the fort with her and go back to the Colonies!

"The three Indians, before departing, had told of an entire tribe they had overtaken only a little way off, decked out as if for a great ceremony and led by a chieftain! Robert well knew who they were. If they were to escape it must be before the dawn of another day!

"That night—quietly, that Angele might not be frightened—the men talked together over the fire. Robert unfolded a plan. The others must start eastward immediately along the river trail. Then as soon as the moon had gone down, he and Angele would go in the bark canoe the men had built—paddle as far eastward as they could, then make for the shelter of the forests.

"The others were eager to escape—for they knew now that the man Robert would never give up the girl, and they loved their own scalps! They hastily gathered together what they wanted to take with them and stole from the fort. During their idle days they had dug an underground passage from the fort to the river; through this they escaped quickly to the trail.

" Robert wakened Angele and told her of his plan. She said not a word, but by the fire in her eyes Robert knew what escape meant to her. Then, gently, he asked her if—when they had found safety in the Colonies—she would go with him to a priest to be married, and for answer she turned and kissed him upon his hand.

" While Robert loaded the canoe which he found at the river bank near the opening of the rough tunnel, Angele joyfully made her few preparations for the long journey.

" Before leaving the fort Robert gave to Angele a small knife, telling her that if they were captured she must use it quickly to end her own life! He then carefully barred every possible entrance, knowing that though the Indians could beat these down or fire the entire place, it would mean some delay in their pursuit and give them a little start toward safety.

" Just as the moon disappeared and a heavy darkness enveloped them they pushed away from shore. But as they started down the river a horrible whoop split the air! Angele pressed her hands tight to her mouth to still her scream of terror. With a

mighty stroke Robert paddled for midstream. But just as he did so an arrow shot past Angele and buried itself in the soft part of his leg!

"The three Indians who had come and gone in such friendly fashion were not of the far-off tribe they claimed to be, but had been sent on ahead by the chieftain to see how things were at the fort. They had gone back and told their story and the chieftain, expecting that some escape might be attempted, had planned to surprise the fort in the night.

"His flesh stinging with the wound of the arrow, Robert lifted his musket and fired quickly. Years before, in his own country, he had been honored by his King for his good marksmanship, but it was God who guided that aim through the darkness, for it shot straight into the very heart of the chieftain! While, in confusion, the Indians gathered about their fallen chief, Robert, with Angele fainting at his feet, was soon lost in the kindly darkness of the river—paddling eastward!"

"Oh, were they saved?" cried Peggy, drawing a long breath.

"Yes. Days afterward they reached a fort

where they found a priest who married them. And they lived happy, useful lives in a settlement in Pennsylvania. Some records of the fort where the priest married them tell the whole story—they're right in the house," and Grandma nodded her head proudly toward the open door.

"Didn't I tell you she was like a page out of history?" Barbara asked Keineth as they drove homeward.

"You just feel as if you were an American History book, beginning with the discovery of America," laughed Peggy.

"If I was a history book I'd leave out dates and the Cabots—I never can get 'em straight," Billy chimed

"There must be lots and lots of stories about brave men that were never put in books," Keineth added thoughtfully.

Peggy yawned widely. "Well, I'm glad I'm not that poor captive maiden and just plain Peggy Lee of Overlook!"

"And I'm gladder still that mother is sure to have ice cream for dinner!"

This, of course, from Billy.

CHAPTER X

PILOT IN DISGRACE

"ANYONE might think that this was Friday the thirteenth," growled Billy. "I broke my fishing rod and I've lost my knife and Jim Archer stepped on a nail and can't go on a hike this afternoon——"

Billy's curious talk never failed to interest Keineth. She knew that it was not Friday and it was not the thirteenth and wondered what Billy ever meant! But she never asked him; something in the scornful superiority with which Billy treated all girls made Keineth very shy with him. She wished they might be better friends, for she felt very sure that it would be great fun to share with him the exciting adventures Billy seemed always to find! Vaguely she wondered what she could do that might put her on an equal footing with this freckled-faced lad who was, after all, only two years older than she was!

"Jim stepped on the nail yesterday—what's that got to do with to-day!" Peggy answered teasingly.

"Well, we were going to hike to-day," Billy explained, too doleful to indulge in retort. "And all the other fellows are doing something else."

"Billy—Billy," called Alice from around the corner. "Just see what I found!" She ran toward them, holding in her hand a dirty, ragged piece of leather.

"Where'd you find that?" demanded Billy, taking it from her. "It's—why, jiminy crickets—it's one of my best shoes!"

Billy meant that it had been!

"Pilot!" the children cried, looking at one another.

"That's what mother used to scold about Rex doing," Peggy recalled.

"Why couldn't he eat my old ones!" groaned Billy, throwing the leather off into some bushes. He felt troubled—he remembered that he had left the shoes out on the floor of his dressing room. It was all his fault, but Pilot would be blamed!

"What can we do?" asked Keineth, sensing a tragedy.

"I don't care anything about the shoes," answered Billy, "'cause I'd just as soon wear these

old ones as not—what d' I care about shoes? But mother'll say that we can't keep the dog!"

"He's only on trial——" Peggy broke in sadly.

"If you girls could keep it a secret we'd give Pilot another chance——"

"Alice is sure to tell! She can't keep anything!"

"I can keep a secret! You just try me!"

"Well, then," Billy lowered his voice mysteriously, "not a word! You just cross your hearts that you won't tell a word! We'll give Pilot another chance!"

Solemnly the three girls crossed their hearts. Billy went off then in search of some amusement of his liking, leaving them with the burden of the secret.

It weighed upon them through the day. And the more heavily when at noon time the cook from Clark's tapped upon the kitchen door and reported with great indignation that "jes' while her back was turned a minute that there dog had stolen her leg she was about to be carvin' and had gone off with it like he was possessed."

"Your leg—well, now!" cried Nora, all sympathy.

"Faith—not my *own* leg, but a leg of lamb!" wept the other, "and what the mistress will be a sayin' I don't know!"

"Where is that dog?" Mrs. Lee had sternly asked of the children. No one knew. Keineth and Peggy exchanged troubled glances and then fixed frowning eyes upon Alice.

"It really is very foolish in us to keep him," Mrs. Lee went on. "Probably this is just the beginning of the annoyances he will cause!"

"He tramples down the flowers terribly," Barbara complained.

Mr. Lee caught the anxious look in Billy's eyes.

"Well, well, Mother, perhaps Billy will keep a closer watch on his dog after this!"

Billy promised with suspicious readiness. "Mr. Sawyer says Pilot's a valuable dog," he told them. "And we ought not to give a valuable dog away, anyway!"

"We'll see," Mrs. Lee concluded.

But that evening Pilot sealed his own doom!

For, as the children were playing croquet near the veranda, he came running across the lawn and

triumphantly dropped at Billy's feet a beautiful gold fish, quite dead!

"Oh—oh—oh!" screamed Alice.

"It's from Sawyer's pond!" cried Peggy on her knees.

"The poor little thing." Keineth lifted it. "It's dead!"

"It's their new Japanese gold fish," added Barbara, who, with Mrs. Lee, had come down the steps from the veranda. "You'll have to pay for this, Billy!"

"I think this is the last straw," said Mrs. Lee sternly, turning to her husband.

"Oh, Mammy, he couldn't help it—they swim round and he thinks they are playing!" Peggy implored.

Pilot, standing back, his tail wagging slowly, regarded them with wondering, disappointed eyes. He had felt so very proud of his fish and now his family seemed to look upon him with displeasure.

"And I can tell the secret now," cried Alice, "we weren't going to tell—he ate one of Billy's *best* shoes!"

"You just wait!" cried Billy.

Peggy turned a terrible face upon Alice. "We'll never, never, never tell anything to the tell-baby again!" she hissed. "Will we, Ken?"

"I guess I knew it first," Alice whimpered.

"It was my fault—I left them out, Mother! And I'd just as soon wear my old shoes!" Billy turned pleadingly to his mother.

"I am sure you would," she smiled, "but nevertheless I must be firm about this dog. He is a nuisance and will be an expense. By the time we have paid the Clarks for their lamb and the Sawyers for their goldfish and bought you a pair of shoes the damages against Pilot will have run up to a nice little sum!"

"But, Mother, you can take it out of my allowance!"

"That will not guard against other things of this same sort happening. No, my son, I do not like to make you unhappy, but we must get rid of the dog. Please say no more about it. Day after to-morrow we'll send him into the city with the vegetable man."

Mrs. Lee turned back to the veranda. When she spoke with that tone in her voice the children

never answered. Peggy, linking her arm in Keineth's, turned an angry shoulder upon Alice. Billy blinked his eyes very fast to clear them of the tears that had gathered in spite of himself, threw his arm about the dog's neck and led him away to some hiding place where, secure from intrusion, he could pour out his rebellious heart to his pet.

"There's no use staying angry at Alice!" Keineth protested in a low tone to Peggy as they walked away. She felt sorry for the little girl standing at a little distance irresolutely swinging a croquet mallet. "It was her secret, anyway and Aunt Nellie would have found out about the shoe some time. Perhaps we were wrong not to tell her at first."

"You always stand up for everybody," Peggy complained, dropping Keineth's arm in vexation. But Peggy's sunny nature could not long carry a grudge of any kind. She had made a solemn vow, too, that she would never be unkind to Alice again! And there *would* be just time before dark to play one more game of croquet!

"Will you play, Allie? You can have red and play last," she cried. "Come on, Ken!"

CHAPTER XI

PILOT WINS A HOME

"WHAT a horrid day!" with a wide yawn Peggy threw the stocking she was darning into the basket. "I wish mother wouldn't make me wear stockings—then I wouldn't have any holes!"

"I wish the sun would shine," Alice chimed, disconsolately.

"If mother were here, she would say that we must make our own sunshine," Barbara laughed. She was folding carefully the white undergarment she had finished making for her college "trousseau"—as her father called it.

"Well, it seems as if everything goes wrong all at once," Peggy refused to be cheered. The children knew she was thinking of Pilot. Pilot's disgrace and sentence hung like a gloomy cloud over their hearts.

"Who'd believe you could think so much of a dog?" Keineth frowned as she pondered the thought. "I used to think Aunt Josephine was so silly over

Fido. I am sure Fido was never as nice as our Pilot, but I suppose Aunt Josephine thinks he's much nicer. Once he swallowed a paper of needles from Aunt Josephine's work basket and she almost fainted, and Celeste had to call a doctor for her and another for the dog and they sent the dog to a hospital. Then Aunt Josephine blamed Celeste and told her she must leave at once and Celeste had hysterics, for you see she'd been with my aunt since she was very young and they had to send for the doctor again for Celeste."

"Oh, how funny!" laughed Peggy, though Keineth's face was very serious.

"Then Aunt Josephine felt sorry and forgave Celeste and they called up the next day from the hospital to say that Fido was very well and that needles seemed to agree with him. But Aunt Josephine worried for weeks and weeks over him."

"Pilot would know better than to eat needles," Alice broke in scornfully.

"Yes—he likes shoes and goldfish," Barbara finished. "Where's Billy?"

From the mother to the smallest of them they felt sorry for Billy. For, though Billy had said

not a word concerning the fate of his pet, the hurt look in his eyes betrayed the sorrow he felt. No one knew where he was—he had disappeared quietly after breakfast. And Pilot was with him.

"No tennis or golf to-day," grieved Barbara, going to the window.

"Anyway we can swim," cried Peggy.

"In the rain?" asked Keineth, astonished.

"Why, of course, silly! Wouldn't we get wet, anyway?"

Keineth's face colored. Peggy went on with a toss of her head: "And I simply must practice swimming under water to-day—the contest isn't very far off. You can't expect me to help you out to the rock, Ken, you'll have to play in shallow water!"

Keineth's soul smarted under this humiliation. The rock was the goal around which their fun centred. It was twenty yards out from shore and its broad, flat surface gave room for six of them to stand upon it at one time. As around it the water was five feet deep, it was necessary for one of the children to help Keineth reach it. Then, while the others practiced all the feats known to the fish world, Keineth always stood carefully in its centre,

head and shoulders above the water's surface and watched them with interest and admiration, tinged with envy.

To conceal the tremble in her voice Keineth had now to swallow very quickly. "All right, Peggy," was all she answered and Peggy never knew how deeply her careless words had hurt her.

Keineth *had* grown discouraged with her swimming. Somehow it was so easy when some one was with her, but she could never seem to muster the courage to dive off into the water the way the others did. And Daddy would be so disappointed!

Mrs. Lee had given her careful instruction in the stroke—perhaps if she was alone, away from Billy's roguish glance and the terror of his catching her ankle under water, she might feel more confidence.

This thought still lingered in her mind when, in the afternoon, they went to the beach. Billy was already in the water; the faithful Pilot was digging on the beach for dog treasures. Because of the drizzling rain Mrs. Lee had not come down.

While Barbara and Peggy were racing under water Keineth found it very easy to slip away. She

chose a spot where a bend of the shore concealed her. She stood knee-deep in the water, going through the movements of the arm stroke, with a careful one, two, three. She put her small teeth tightly together—she *would* have confidence, she *would* go out deeper, throw herself calmly into the water in Peggy-fashion and swim off, one, two, three! She *would* remember to breathe easily and keep her arms under the surface of the water!

There was an indomitable will in the child. She *did* throw herself in, and, counting one, two, three, forgot her usual gasp of fright; suddenly it seemed natural and as if she had always done it! She felt a delicious joy in the ease with which her stroke carried her ahead through the water. She wished Billy might see her now! Then, exhausted by her effort, triumphant and happy, she reached for a footing on the bottom. Her toe could not find it! With a cry of terror she threw her arms wildly upward, involuntarily seeking for some hold! Then she slipped, slipped down, fathoms and fathoms it seemed—a dreadful choking gripped her, like tight arms upon her chest! She tried to call, but the water only made a fearful gurgle in her throat! She

wanted her father—*he'd* stop that terrible pain in her chest and take that grip from her throat!

Suddenly she felt very, very tired and as if she would sleep when the pain was gone. Her body lifted slowly; her hand, flung upward, gripped something soft but firm in her clutch—the water splashed about her! She thought it was her father! He was pulling her away, then she seemed to go to sleep.

When consciousness returned, Keineth found herself lying upon the beach wrapped in Barbara's raincoat. Peggy was crying and Barbara, her face very white, was rubbing her hand. On her other side knelt Billy, the rain dripping from his bare arms, his face flushed as though from violent exercise. Behind him stood Pete, the man of all work in the community, who had been drawing gravel from the beach.

"Darling!" cried Barbara. "Oh, are you all right?"

Keineth slowly looked all around. *Had* it been some dream, then—wasn't her Daddy there at all? Barbara had slipped an arm under her head and was holding it higher. It helped her breathe.

"What was it?" Keineth managed to whisper.

"I'd never, never, never have forgiven myself," Barbara was crying now.

"You almost drowned," Peggy explained. Now that the danger was over she began to enjoy the excitement.

"And Pilot saved you!" Billy cried.

"We had just missed you and Billy had started up the shore when we heard your cry!"

"And it didn't take that dog two seconds to get out to you! Just say he isn't human!"

"I thought it was Daddy," Keineth whispered.

"What, dear?" Barbara had not caught the words. "You must keep very quiet, Ken. And Billy's had his first aid case!"

Pete clapped Billy on the shoulder. "Wal, I jes' calculate now that it was them gim-cracks Billy here put you through, missy, that brung you to!"

"I always wondered if I could do it," Billy said with pardonable pride, "and, say, that'll mean a medal from the troop!"

Alice had run home to tell Mrs. Lee of the accident. Together they had hurried down to the beach. With Pete's help they lifted Keineth to the gravel wagon and, like a triumphal procession,

moved slowly homeward. Mrs. Lee immediately tucked Keineth into bed with hot water bottles and blankets to check the chill that was creeping over her.

"She'll be all right, I am sure," Mrs. Lee whispered to the anxious children. Later the doctor came, left some powders and patted Keineth on the head. "A good sleep and quiet will fix up those nerves O. K. Then forget all about it."

He was quite right; the next morning Keineth, quite as well as ever, joined the family at breakfast. Though Mrs. Lee had warned them not to mention the accident to Keineth unnecessarily, Mr. Lee did pinch her cheek and say: "You lost your head, didn't you, little sport? If you'd just kept your arms down, now—but, if you go exploring strange beaches again you'll remember, won't you?"

Peggy and Keineth, moved by a feeling of intense relief, suddenly caught hands under the table. For into both hearts had come the fear that Keineth's mishap might end the swimming for the summer! And Keineth had not forgotten that, though it had ended sadly, for a very brief time she *had* mastered the stroke.

Mrs. Lee smiled down the table. "And I think Pilot has won a home! Except for him——" she stopped suddenly, her eyes bright with tears. "William, bring home the finest collar you can find and to-night we will decorate our dog with all due honor!"

CHAPTER XII

A LETTER FROM DADDY

"KEN—a letter!"

Billy rushed toward the garden waving a large square envelope over his head.

Keineth and Peggy were weeding their flower bed. Keineth dropped her hoe quickly to seize the letter.

"It's from Washington, and it's got a seal on it like the seal of the United States!" exclaimed Billy.

"Oh, let me see!" cried Peggy.

Keineth had taken the letter. Looking from one to the other, she held it close to her.

"I — I can't — it's from the President, I guess——" A wave of embarrassment seized her and she stopped short, wishing that she might run away with her treasure.

"The President—writing to you! Oh, say——" Billy snorted in derision.

Peggy, offended at Keineth's shyness, turned her back upon her.

"I don't want to see your letter, anyway," she said ungraciously.

"Oh, please—I'd love to show it, only—I promised——" Then, as Peggy gave no sign of relenting, Keineth walked slowly toward the house with her letter.

"I think Keineth's mean to have secrets," and Peggy dug her hoe savagely into the ground. "She acts so mysterious about her father and I'll bet it isn't anything at all!"

"But that letter *was* from the President, I guess! Gee whiz, think of getting a letter really from him! I wish I was Ken!'

"It's nothing! Anyone can be President—I mean, any man!"

"Just the same, mother told me that some day we would be very proud of knowing Keineth's father. She wouldn't tell me any more. I'll bet it would be awful interesting to know him! There's something certainly queer about how no one knows where he is! I guess I'll ask Ken to tell me just a little bit. I can keep a secret."

"Well, you can know her old secret for all I care," and Peggy started for the barn.

Billy did not follow. He had thought of a plan. He would challenge Ken to a game of tennis. And he would let her beat him. Then he'd ask her very casually about her father and promise, on his scout's honor, not to tell a soul! The plan seemed good. He'd wait for her to come down.

In her room Keineth had opened the large white envelope. From inside she drew a sheet of paper upon which were written a few lines, and with it a blue envelope of very thin paper, addressed in her father's familiar handwriting. With a little cry she caught it up and kissed it again and again. Before she broke its seal she read what was written on the sheet which had enclosed it.

The few lines were signed "Faithfully, Woodrow Wilson." They began, " My dear little soldier girl," and they told her that it was with great pleasure he had forwarded her letter to her father and now returned to her its answer. He called it an honor to serve them both and expressed the hope that some day he might make her acquaintance and tell her how deeply he admired and respected her father.

Keineth merely glanced at the lines. What mattered it to her that they had been written by the

President of the United States! Did she not hold tightly in her fingers a letter from her Daddy?

"My precious child," it began. Keineth had suddenly to brush her eyes in order to see the letters. "Your letter found me at one of my many stopping places. It brought to me a breath of home. I shut myself in my room and read and reread it, and it seemed to bring back the old room and the chair that could always hold us both. I could hear your voice, too. I miss you terribly, little girl, but I thank God daily that you are well and happy and with good friends.

"I have travelled through many lands of which I will have much to tell you. I have been in the Far East—poor Tante would have wept with joy over the beauty of the Flowery Kingdom. I have bowed before enough emperors and kings to make my poor back ache. Do you remember how you used to rub the kinks out of it? I have spent hours and hours with the great men of the world. I have seen wonderful beauty and glorious sunshine. (How I'd like to ship some of it to old New York.) And I have seen ugly things, too. We shall have great times when we are together again, childy, telling one

another the stories of these days we have been parted. You shall tell me something first and then I will tell you. It will take us hours and days and weeks.

"Now I am going in my wanderings to other lands that are black with the horror of war. I shall have to witness the suffering it brings to the homes and I will be more glad than I can tell that my baby is far from its pain.

"I have learned in these wanderings of mine that it is in the children this old world must place its trust. That if they want a better government they must give to the little ones all that is pure and clean and honest and good and see to it that they are happy. I feel like shouting it from the housetops—'Make them happy!' It doesn't take much.

"I feel your big, wondering eyes on mine—you do not understand! Ah, well, girlie, all I mean is—romp and play—build up a strong little body for that heart of yours—see things that are clean and good, and whatever the game is—play square!

"We cannot be grateful enough to the dear Lees for all they are doing for us. Try and return their kindness with loyalty. I will write later to Mrs. Lee in regard to the plans for the fall. Do whatever

she thinks best. You will stay with them until I return. Just when that will be I cannot tell now, but you must be brave. Your courage helps me, too, my dear.

"Sometimes, when my day's work is done and I can put it from my mind, I close my eyes and dream —dream of the little home we will build when I return: build—not in the old Square, that is gone except to memory—but in some sunny, open spot where we can live and work together and lead useful lives. It is a beautiful castle as I see it in my dreams—and beautiful with love.

"I will send this letter with other papers to Washington and they will forward it to you.

"Good-by, little soldier—I salute you, my General.

"God keep you for

"DADDY."

The words rang through Keineth's heart like a song. She longed to pour out her joy in music, but Billy's voice came to her from below.

"Ken, Ken."

"Yes, Billy."

"Come on, I'll play tennis with you! Bet you can beat me, too!"

Keineth suddenly remembered Peggy's and Billy's rudeness. Perhaps Billy was trying to make amends. She really wanted to be alone with her letter a little longer, but if Billy wanted her to play! She felt proud, too, that he had asked her.

Billy found less difficulty than he had anticipated in letting Keineth win the set. In fact, deep in his heart, he was not sure he had "let" her. For Keineth, fired with the joy within her, played brilliantly, flying over the court like a winged creature, returning Billy's serves with a surprising quickness and strength that completely broke down his boyish confidence in himself.

"Thanks awfully—that *was* fun," Keineth said as they sank down under a tree for a moment's rest.

Though his plan had worked very well so far, Billy now felt at a loss to know how he ought to proceed. So, accepting her thanks with a brief nod, he bolted straight to the point.

"Say, Ken, if you'll tell me about your father I promise on my scout's honor not to tell a soul! And you ought to tell me anyway, for didn't my dog save

your life, and didn't I give you first aid or you might've died!"

"Oh, Billy!" Keineth cried, then stopped short. Her heart warmed to Billy—they seemed almost like pals now! He had preferred playing tennis with her than going off somewhere with the boys. And she did want more than anything else right then to talk about her daddy; to tell how great he was and how he was visiting courts of Eastern lands. And she wanted to show Billy the letter from the President, it was in her pocket. And she knew if Billy said he'd never tell that he would not.

But a soldier never swerves from duty and had not her father called her his "General"?

"I—I can't, Billy," she finished.

There was something so final in her voice and in the set of her lips that Billy, red with rage, rose quickly to his feet.

"I'll bet you haven't got any secret and you're just making up to be smart and I'll get even with you, baby! And you didn't beat me playing tennis, for I let you, anyway! You wait——" and, vengefully, Billy strode away, leaving an unhappy little girl sitting alone under the tree.

Peggy met Billy on the road. Peggy was in search of Keineth. Her nature was too happy to long nurse a grievance. She didn't care if Keineth did have a secret! And she had wonderful news, too!

But Billy's morose bearing stirred her curiosity.

"Did she tell you, Billy?" she asked.

"I'll bet she hasn't got any secret that's worth knowing! And she needn't say she beat me at tennis, either."

"Oh, Billy Lee, you let her beat so's she'd tell you! I'm just *glad* she didn't! I guess girls never tell anything they've promised not to—even if they are girls!"

In great scorn she ran from the disconsolate Billy. She had spied Keineth alone under the tree.

"Ken—Ken! Great news!" Peggy rushed toward her. "We are going camping with Ricky—you and me—next week! Hurray!"

CHAPTER XIII

CAMPING

KEINETH learned that Ricky was Peggy's gymnasium teacher. Her real name was Fredericka Grimball, but to "her girls" she was always known as Ricky. The camp was among the hills ten miles from Fairview. And during the vacation months Ricky took her girls there in groups of twenty. With their play she gave them instruction in scoutcraft.

"We go for tramps into the woods and she tells us stories of the birds and trees. I never knew until she told me that there are male and female trees, and flowers and all the things that grow; did you know it, Ken? And we found a weasel, last summer—it was almost tame. We're going to learn signalling, too; perhaps this winter Ricky will let us form a troop and join the Girl Scouts."

Keineth, with wide-open eyes, was trying to follow Peggy's incoherent description of the camp life they were to begin on the morrow. Back in her mind was a tiny doubt as to whether she would

enjoy twenty girls—all strangers! But she would fight this shyness and do whatever Peggy did.

"We sleep right out of doors when it is clear. The woods smell so good and there are all sorts of funny sounds as if all the bugs and things were having parties."

"Oh-h, I wonder if I'll like it!" and Keineth shivered with pleasurable dread.

"We paddle in canoes on a little lake that's like a mill-pond. It's awfully shallow and the water is so clear you can see right through it, and we ride horseback, too! I'm a patrol leader," Peggy finished with pride. She folded the last middy blouse neatly into a wicker suitcase. Their luggage consisted of bloomers, blouses, bathing-suits and blankets.

"Easy to remember—all B's," Mrs. Lee had laughed.

Mr. Lee drove them to the camp. "Come back with some muscle in these arms of yours and a few more freckles on your nose," he said to Keineth, pinching her cheek affectionately.

"Camp Wachita"—the girls had nicknamed it Camp Wish-no-more—was nestled in the hills with the tiny lake at its front door and a dense woodland

at its back. Sleeping tents were built in a semi-circle about the central building, in which were the living-rooms. On a grassy level stretch close to the water was the out-of-door gymnasium and beyond that the boathouse and dock to which several gaily-painted canoes were fastened.

The family at Camp Wachita consisted of Martha Washington Jones, the colored cook; Bonsey, her twelve-year-old son, who very occasionally made himself useful about the camp; Captain O'Leary, a Spanish War Veteran by title and by occupation caretaker of the horses and boats; Miky, the little Irish terrier, and Jim Crow, who had been brought, the summer before, to the camp hospital from the woodland to receive first aid for a broken wing, and had refused to leave the family.

Keineth had little difficulty in making friends with the other girls. There seemed to be among them such a jolly spirit of comradeship that she found it very easy to call them Jessie and Nellie and Kate, and never once wondered at their quickly adopting Peggy's familiar "Ken." She thought that Peggy must have known them all very well and

was surprised when Peggy told her that there were only three of her friends among them.

"But we're all Ricky's girls, you see," she explained, as though that was all that was necessary to create a firm bond of loyalty and friendship among them.

"Ricky," this captain of girls, was a tall, straight, broad-shouldered woman of twenty-five. The sunniness of her smile, the firmness of her jaw and the all-understanding warmth of her dark eyes told of the character which made her a leader of others and a spirit beloved among them all.

Each new day of the camp life brought to Keineth some new experience, thrilling in its strangeness to the little girl. She had learned to love going to sleep with the great, star-lit vault of the sky enveloping her; the singing of the "bugs," as Peggy had put it, was fairy music to her ears; she had conquered her first terror of the shell-like canoes and now could paddle with confidence, even venturing alone upon the shallow water. And to her own surprise she was enjoying the companionship of the other girls!

Among them was one named Stella Maybeck.

Stella was not an attractive girl—she was too tall and too thin, her voice was loud and her manners a little careless. She had big, dark eyes with a hungry look in their depths. She adored Ricky and showed a preference for Keineth's company. At first Keineth felt a little repelled by the girl's rough ways, but gradually she grew to feel that beneath them was a warm, kind heart and that it was, perhaps, shyness that often made Stella's manner disagreeable.

They walked together on the tramps into the woods and Keineth enjoyed the fund of knowledge the other girl seemed to have concerning all the little woodland creatures and their ways.

"I don't see why you like to be with Stella Maybeck," Peggy had said to her one day. "I think she is horrid!" she finished unkindly.

"Why, Peggy!" Keineth frowned. It was very unfair in Peggy to speak in this way concerning one of the other girls. Keineth did not suspect that perhaps a little jealousy prompted Peggy's ungraciousness.

This little cloud was to grow over the whole camp. And in the second week Ricky's girls learned

a lesson of greater value to them than all the scout-craft they loved.

Twice a week the vegetable man came to the camp with fruit and vegetables. These the girls placed in the storehouse, one of them carefully checking off the purchases as they did so. One morning some oranges were reported missing. Ricky paid little attention to the incident. The next day one of the girls came to her and announced that a ring had been taken from her sleeping tent. Although disturbed, Miss Grimball gently rebuked the girl for having disobeyed the camp rules in bringing jewelry to it and sent her away, bidding her speak to no one of her loss.

Then Miss Grimball's silver purse containing ten dollars in bills was taken from her desk!

Like a flash the story spread through the camp. The girls gathered in an excited group. Keineth and Stella, with arms locked, stood together. From the other side of the group Peggy saw them. The jealousy that had been slumbering within her heart suddenly gripped her.

" Well, I think I could guess who did it, all right, and I just think it's a shame for anyone like that to

dare to come to Ricky's camp!" It was not necessary to do more than fix her gaze indignantly upon Stella Maybeck. With a little gasp Stella turned and ran into her tent. The others pressed closer to Peggy.

"Oh, do you think so?" they whispered in awed voices.

"Peggy!" cried Keineth, imploringly.

"I'm not going to say another word," Peggy answered, perhaps a little frightened at what she had done.

The girls waited breathlessly for Miss Grimball to take some action in the matter. Each felt that the disgrace must be wiped from the happy camp life.

At noon Ricky's whistle sounded. The girls assembled on the gymnasium ground. Their captain stood before them, clear-eyed, smiling at them all with her usual confidence. Stella, with Keineth, had joined the others and stood in the background.

"I think you all know what has happened. I am disturbed, but I will not suspect one of my girls. All I want to say is this—so great is my trust in your loyalty, in your honor, and in your sense of what is square—if one of you, through an unfortunate yield-

ing to temptation, has taken these things that have been lost, they will be returned, because you are girls of honor. So I am not worrying. Now, please do not talk of the matter among yourselves."

The routine of the day went on. The girls avoided Stella; only Keineth kept close to her side. Keineth longed to pour out to Stella her confidence in her innocence and her indignation at Peggy, but a certain pride in Stella's manner forbade it; she could not find the right words, so she simply occasionally squeezed Stella's hand!

In this way two unhappy days passed. Then on the third morning Peggy, crossing the path leading to the kitchen, saw Jim Crow scurrying toward the wood with a spoon in his mouth! On tip-toe she followed him. Turning off from the trail near the edge of the woodland, he stood for a moment as though listening, then dropped his treasure into the hollow trunk of a dead tree!

And there Peggy, following the rascal, found the oranges, the ring, and Ricky's silver purse!

In that moment when Peggy stood alone among the trees, the stolen things in her hands, she learned a lesson that she could never forget! She walked

slowly back to Miss Grimball's office and told her the story of Jim and of her own unjust accusation of Stella.

"We should have suspected Jim, the villain," Ricky laughed. "Another chapter in scoutcraft, Peggy. Will you go, my dear, and tell Stella?" Then she gently put her hand upon Peggy's head. "Judge not, my dear," and, leaning, she kissed her.

Peggy rushed off in search of Stella. She found her sitting on the dock, a picture of misery, Keineth by her side.

"Stella, I was a wicked, wicked girl! It was Jim Crow stole the things, and I found them in an old tree and I wouldn't blame you if you never forgave me! I think the reason I was so horrid was because I was just *jealous* that Ken loved you more than she did me——" For lack of breath Peggy stopped, her soul clean from her confession.

A great joy came into Stella's dark eyes. She held out her hand and Peggy caught it in a tight grip.

"Now I'm going to call all the girls together and tell them the whole story and that I'm just terribly ashamed." She ran from them, her hands to her mouth, loudly giving the call of the camp.

There was great rejoicing at Camp-Wish-no-more. The cloud of suspicion had lifted. The girls could not be nice enough to Stella, and for the first time she seemed to lose her shyness and awkwardness among them. Then Ricky decided that, in order to entirely forget the whole thing, they would go on an all-night hike to the old mill on Cobble Hill.

"Hooray—hooray!" went up from eager throats.

"Three cheers for Stella!"

"Three cheers for Peggy!" they cried again.

"Down with Jim Crow!"

That night, under the stars, Keineth snuggled close to Peggy. She had asked to be Peggy's blanket mate.

"You're all right, Peg," she whispered, Billy-fashion, "and I do love you most of all!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

"SPORT'S WEEK" had begun at the Shore Club. The excitement of it gripped the Lee family. Each talked of the game in which he or she was most interested and no one listened to the other. Barbara, with an absorbed air, mentally played the shots she would make when on Friday she would meet in the final round of match play for the championship title her old foe, Carol Day. Peggy had no thought for anything but the swimming contest. Mr. Lee was chairman of the committee on arrangements and spent most of his time at the telephone. Mrs. Lee did her part in the decorating of the club-house and went about with her arms full of gay bunting and her mouth full of pins.

And Keineth shared the excitement! For she had qualified in the children's tennis tournament and would play in the doubles and had drawn Billy for her partner!

It was her first real contest! Secretly she shiv-

ered with fright but outwardly tried to appear calm like Peggy. All the day before the tennis matches began she went about with her racquet in her hand as though to accustom her trembling fingers to its hold.

Though Billy, since the day he had tried to make Keineth confide in him the story of her father's absence, had maintained toward her a scornful indifference, he had accepted her as a partner because there was no alternative. But he managed to convey to her that he considered it an unfair indignity that he should be so handicapped. And he talked entirely of the paddling races.

However, Keineth could not be discouraged. In her mind was one thought only—they *must* win! For, each day, in her room she was writing a careful account of all that happened to send to her Daddy, and failure could have no part in the story.

And in the very first match they defeated Molly Sawyer and Joe Cary!

Margaret Dale, playing with Charlie Myers had, after a hard game, beaten Grace Schuyler and Merton Day. Then Keineth and Billy played against them. It was a close match; the courts were circled by

an interested crowd of onlookers. Though Billy had had to play with all his skill to meet Charlie Myers' strength of volley, he knew that Keineth had more than done her part, too.

"She played way over her head," he answered sullenly to the praise his family bestowed upon her.

One more set put them in the final match against Jim Downer and his sister Helen. A taste of victory had given to Keineth a poise that steadied her in her game; this matching of strength, skill and quickness—something she had never known before—had developed a surprising confidence in herself. Her joy was not in the defeat of their opponents, rather in her own mastery of all those things which for so long she had been trying to learn!

"Good luck to you, kiddies," Mr. Lee had said to them at the breakfast table. "Play your best and then you won't mind if you are defeated. And if the other fellows play better, don't think up any excuses—it's something to be good losers!"

In the brief moment of waiting before the final match began, Keineth, standing quietly near the courts, thought how different she was from the funny little girl who had come to Overlook two months

before. She knew now what her father had meant when he had told her that that old life, with him and Tante in the old house, had cheated her out of the other things children had. He had been right. He would be pleased, now, to know the part she was taking with the others.

The judges called the match; Keineth caught her breath and ran on to the court. She gave one whispered word to Billy.

"We've *got* to win!"

Billy had not enjoyed Keineth's sudden rise into fame. He felt less tolerant and the old grudge flamed into being. If they won now—and everyone said they would—they'd all think it was Keineth that had won it. They'd make an awful fuss over her—they always did over girls—and there'd be no living with either her or Peggy. He could throw the game, just fall down on one or two returns and no one would know the difference! He felt very sure of winning the paddling races and what did he care about the tennis match, anyway?—it'd be different if they were the real matches, but they were just for children. These thoughts ran through his

mind as he swung his racquet backward and forward in the air, a heavy scowl wrinkling his face.

And Keineth's confident "We've got to win" had been the last drop in his cup of annoyance.

The first two games were slow, a little volleying and a good many "outs." Someone called from the gallery, "Warm up!" Keineth threw her head back with an answering smile, for she recognized Mr. Lee's voice

Their opponents won the third game against a thirty. That spurred Keineth; the fourth game was faster with some hot volleying and pretty returns and won by Keineth and Billy in a quickly mounting score. Excited, Keineth did not notice that Billy had not returned one or two balls with his usual skill.

The next, a deuce game, was hotly contested. Her face ablaze with interest, Keineth held her little body tensely poised on one toe, ready for instant action. The faces of the crowd around her blurred into nothing—there seemed only left in her small world those two beyond the net!

The next game was bewildering. Keineth played desperately, but they had only won thirty points when

the others made the game! The set stood four to two in Keineth's favor, but their opponents were playing stronger with each game.

In the seventh game Billy dropped off shamelessly. He was never quite ready. Before Keineth realized the situation the others had won and won easily!

"Billy!" Keineth whispered imploringly. The indifferent look on Billy's face struck terror to her heart. What *was* the matter with him?

The next game Keineth won alone—if Billy could not play she'd play for him! Her little teeth, clenched tight together, gleamed white through her parted lips. The crimson of her cheeks mounted into her fair hair.

"What a picture!" Mrs. Lee whispered to her husband. She was not thinking of the game at all. "What a spirit! Think, William, what that can mean in this world when the child's grown up!"

"That's just why this sort of sport is good for them," Mr. Lee whispered back. "But what is the matter with Billy?"

That is what Keineth wondered, too. They had won five games—they *must* win the next and set!

Walking close to Billy she confronted him, her face ablaze. For just a moment they looked hard into one another's eyes; not a boy and girl, the one proudly conscious of his boyhood and two years' difference in age, the other a very young and all-admiring girl—but just two mortals contesting together against two others.

And at last they, Keineth and Billy, met on equal ground—Keineth had proven her mettle—let Billy show his! Keineth's clear, straightforward gaze made Billy drop his eyes in sudden shame.

"Play square," she said sternly.

And Billy played square! Their opponents had not a chance!

"Well, Billy did wake up," some one said and some one else added: "If they'd lost it would have been his fault. That Randolph girl played a corking game for her age!"

They had won the tennis tournament! Keineth did not enjoy half so much the silver cup they placed in her hands as she did Peggy's delight and Mr. Lee's hearty handclasp of congratulation. The young people carried them off to luncheon at the

club-house, where they made merry far into the afternoon.

That evening Billy, with a very serious face, approached his father, where he sat alone on the veranda.

"Dad, I've withdrawn my name from the paddle races!"

"What's wrong, son?"

"I'm not a good sport—that's why," Billy answered with his usual frankness. "I had a sort of grudge against Keineth because she wouldn't tell me about her father and I'd vowed to get even and I just laid down on that tennis game—until she made me ashamed!"

"But she did make you ashamed, Billy?"

"Yes—she told me to play square and I just thought then that no one would ever have to tell me to play square more than once!"

Mr. Lee laid his arm across the boy's shoulder.

"Laddie—these games we play teach us a lot, don't they? There is something in them more than fun and more than the health they give! You've learned a motto to-day that you can pin on your

shield when you go out to meet the other matches life offers!"

"You can just bet I'll always try to play square! And I'm going now to find Ken and tell her she's a brick!"

Mr. Lee watched the boy disappear. Though a smile hovered about his lips, his eyes were serious—the cigar between his fingers had quite gone out.

"May he keep that spirit all through life," he was thinking.

CHAPTER XV

NOT ON THE PROGRAM!

KEINETH, a little tired after the strain of the tennis match, thought it much more fun to watch the others. Billy *had* gone into the paddling races, and no one but Mr. Lee and Keineth knew that it was because Keineth had begged him—and he had won and Keineth had been the first to examine the wrist watch he had received as an award. And on Friday the entire family waited eagerly near the eighteenth green of the golf course for Barbara and Carol Day to play up in the final game for the golf championship!

Keineth and Peggy held hands tightly in their excitement.

"Oh, I can tell by Barb's walk she's ahead," Peggy cried as the two players, their caddies and a small gallery, appeared around the corner of the wood that screened the seventeenth green.

"She was two down at the turn and Carol was playing par golf," someone volunteered.

"What does down at the turn mean?" whispered Keineth.

"The turn's at the end of the ninth hole and a-l-a-s, down means Barb was behind. Pooh, she always plays better when she's down!"

A man had just returned from the fifteenth tee.

"They were dormie at the sixteenth," the girls heard him say.

"What *queer* words they do use in golf! I thought dormie was a window!"

"Oh, Ken," giggled Peggy, "you mean dormer and it's dormie when one player is just as many holes ahead as there are more holes to play. Good gracious!" her face fell, "that means that Barbara will *have* to win these three holes and she always slices on the eighteenth!"

"She won't this time, Peggy! That girl's like steel in a match!" a man nearby broke in.

"She's driving first!" Billy cried. "Oh, look—look—look! P-e-ach-y!"

Breathlessly they watched the two players advance toward the green. Barbara had outdriven her opponent but she topped her second. Carol Day, playing a brassie, put her ball well up. Barbara

recovered on her third shot, carried the bunker which guarded the green twenty yards from it, and laid her ball on the edge of the green. Carol's third caught the top of the bunker, shot into the air and dropped back into the sand pit!

"Oh-h!" breathed Peggy delightedly into Keineth's ear. She knew it was the worst bunker on the course.

But difficulties only made Carol Day play the better. She studied the shot for several moments while Barbara and the gallery watched with tense interest. Then they saw her lift her niblick slowly, her head bent; a cloud of sand raised, the ball cleared the bunker's top, dropped upon the green, rolled a few feet and rested within an easy putt of the cup!

The gallery applauded. It was a splendid shot, one of the kind that ought to win a match for its player. Even Keineth cried out in generous praise of the play.

Peggy gripped Keineth's hand so hard that it hurt.

"Steady, steady, there, Barb," Mr. Lee muttered.

Barbara walked slowly to her ball. Her eyes were lowered, she did not glance at the familiar faces about the green. Her next shot demanded the utmost skill, care and steadiness she could command. Of them all she was the coolest. She *must* run down her putt to win the match!

Peggy suddenly shut her eyes that she could not see what happened. The others saw Barbara, with an easy movement, line her putt. The ball rolled slowly over the clipped turf, dead straight to the hole—closer, closer, hung for one fraction of a second on the rim of the cup and then with a thud that was like music, dropped in! Barbara was the champion of the women players of the club!

"Why, it almost made me sick," Peggy confided to Keineth afterwards. "I will be a wreck when this week is over! And oh, if I can only win the life-saving medal to-morrow! Think of it, four prizes in the Lee family! There will be no living with us. I don't care a straw for the cups they give—it's that little bit of a bronze medal I want. There's going to be a man here from Washington to give it to the winner—one of the Volunteer Life-saving Association. And that medal's *got* to go

right here," and defiantly she struck her hand against her breast.

"I just can't wait," Keineth sighed in a tragic manner.

"The last day is most fun of all," Peggy explained.

"How can we ever settle down into calm living?"

"Huh—fast enough! I've got to begin reviewing English. I have a condition to make up."

"And I want to work on my music," cried Keineth, suddenly conscience-smitten.

"Mother says that to-morrow night we'll wind up with a supper on the beach. It's lots jollier than the dinner dance at the Club and we're too young to go to that, anyway. Barb could go if she wanted to, but she'd rather have the fun at the beach. We fry bacon and roast corn and mother makes cocoa and then we sing. Oh, dear, won't it be awful to grow old and not do those things?"

Together they sighed mightily at such a prospect!

For the last day of the Sports Week there was a program of fun that began immediately after breakfast and lasted through the day. All the club members gathered on the beach where gaily-decorated

booths had been built. From these lemonade and sandwiches were served continuously. The motor boats, canoes and skiffs, their flags flying, made bright splashes of color against the green water. Stakes, topped with flags, marked the course for the swimming races. The judges were taken out on one of the larger motor boats.

Keineth had never seen anything quite like it. To her it seemed like a chapter from some story and a story strange and exciting!

The committee had arranged games and races for the very little youngsters so that during the morning the beach front was astir with them—bright-eyed, bobbed-haired, starched little girls and tanned, bare-legged boys, trying vainly to elude the watchful care of the mothers and nurse-girls, who made a background for the pretty scene.

The life-saving contest followed the swimming races. Four others besides Peggy had entered: Molly Sawyer, Helen Downer, Mary Freeman and Gladys Day.

Keineth had never watched a contest of this sort before. She cried out in alarm when she saw a man, fully dressed, at a signal totter off the deck

of the judges' motor boat. Someone next to her laughed.

"That's just pretend—he's an expert swimmer! It's Mary Freeman's turn! Watch her!"

Keineth saw Mary detach herself from a small group, rush into the water tearing off her blouse as she did so. Then something went wrong—Mary seemed to make no headway toward the man, the judges blew a whistle, the man who had jumped overboard climbed back into the boat; there was some laughter which others quickly frowned down.

Peggy had drawn last place in the contest. When Keineth saw the others fail, one after another, she glanced at Peggy with nervous anxiety. But Peggy stood, outwardly calm, the picture of confidence, her eyes fastened upon the judges' boat, waiting for her signal.

Another man fell overboard; to Keineth he looked like a giant! She saw Peggy spring forward—in a flash her blouse was off and she had thrown it backward over her head. She was swimming and Keineth knew that as she swam she was unbuttoning and kicking off her shoes and her skirt. An encouraging shout went up as she moved rapidly forward, her

head under water, first one straight, strong arm, then the other, shooting out and ahead!

Off at a little distance the judges' boat was chugging. From the beach the spectators, breathless, could see a struggle in the water. Then, where for a moment there had been nothing visible, they saw Peggy's head; saw her making for shore swimming on her back with strong leg strokes, one arm encircling the man's head, her grip holding his chin and nostrils out of water and pinioning his arms so that his struggles could not drag her down.

A shout went up from the beach front—louder and louder; the motor boats blew their sirens. Keineth ran to the water's edge that she might be the first to greet the proud young swimmer.

Willing hands helped Peggy pull the rescued man upon the sand where, the water dripping from her shoulders, Peggy gave "first aid." After several moments, marked by a big, sunburned man whom Keineth learned afterwards was the man from Washington, the victim was pronounced saved, rose to his feet and was the first to shake Peggy's hand!

"Why, it was so real that it seemed awful funny to see him just get up like that," Keineth giggled

afterwards, when she had a moment alone with her Peggy.

"Well—it wasn't any easy thing to bring him in! Why, he struggled just as much as though he was really drowning! But, oh, Ken—Ken, I've won my medal!"

Later the children went back to the house to prepare the picnic. They trooped up the road, an excited group; Keineth and Peggy in advance.

As they came nearer to Overlook a strange sight met their eyes. They stopped short.

For there on the gravel drive, its high-powered engine snorting and puffing, a rigid, uniformed figure at the wheel, stood Aunt Josephine's bright yellow car!

CHAPTER XVI

AUNT JOSEPHINE

"It's Aunt Josephine!" cried Keineth.

"Oh, dear, she'll spoil the fun!"

Keineth wished the ground would open wide and swallow her up, so deep was her dismay. Never in her life had she so hated that yellow monster and Kingston's rigid back! And yes, the black-robed figure in the back *was* Celeste!

"Oh, dear," echoed Alice.

"Maybe she has some word from father." The thought lent wings to Keineth's feet—she flew over the ground, Peggy following closely, a most curious sight for Aunt Josephine's eyes, with her wet bathing-suit and her blue and white bathrobe flying out behind!

No, Aunt Josephine had no news of Keineth's father! She was on a motor trip and had stopped at Fairview. She was quite the same Aunt Josephine, beautifully gowned in a linen dress whose trimmings matched the stylish little hat she wore on her head.

She rose from the wicker chair on the veranda, where she sat with Mrs. Lee, to greet the children. Keineth felt her critical glance wander from her to the others even while she was answering her aunt's questions.

Mrs. Lee read the consternation behind the children's polite greetings, for in her sweet voice she broke in:

"I have been asking Mrs. Winthrop to join us to-night in our beach frolic—you girlies must urge her!"

"Oh, please do!" they cried together.

Aunt Josephine did not seem to hear them. She was looking very hard at Keineth. "She does look well," she admitted; "I suppose the quiet life here has been good for her." She spoke directly to Keineth and the child felt in her tone the mild disapproval she knew so well. "I am on my way through to the Yellowstone, child. I thought, perhaps, I might pick you up and take you along, but you are so freckled that you are a sight!" Then, as though she recalled the beach supper and the children's invitation, she added, apologetically, "It

is very kind, but I am a little out of the habit of such things!"

"Hateful thing—how can she be Ken's aunt!" Peggy was thinking resentfully, for she had seen a hurt look creep into Keineth's eyes.

Mrs. Lee's face wore its most cordial smile. She laid her hand upon Aunt Josephine's arm.

"That's just why I like to go to picnics and things—it *is* easy to get out of the habit of fun! Do send your man away and join us! It will be a great treat to know our Keineth's aunt a little better."

Now what neither Keineth nor Peggy, nor even Mrs. Lee could guess was that beneath the folds of expensive linen and lace and dainty pleatings of rose silk was a heart that was just hungry because—years and years before—it had forgotten "how to have fun!" The happy faces of the children, freckled though they were, the simplicity of the pretty home, the flowers blooming so riotously and gaily all about, the light that lay deep in Mrs. Lee's eyes roused a longing very strange to Aunt Josephine! Perhaps if she had had youngsters of her own she might never have been the kind of an Aunt Josephine she

was—tyrannized over by a Fido and a Celeste and a Kingston!

"I will come," Aunt Josephine decided so suddenly that they were startled. "Keineth, dear, please tell Celeste to come to me."

Celeste was instructed to unpack a warm coat and to bring a robe. Then she and Kingston were told that they might drive back to town, to return later for Mrs. Winthrop.

Mrs. Lee carried Aunt Josephine off to the tiny guest room while the children flew toward the pantry to make ready the picnic baskets.

Vaguely Keineth felt worried, as though, in some way or other, she was to blame for this unwelcome addition to the party. But Peggy, joining them in middy blouse and bloomers, reassured her in an excited whisper.

"It'll be such fun just to see how she'll act! Oh, I do wish that funny maid and that awful leather-man were going, too! Do you suppose she can *ever* eat a bacon sandwich without a fork?"

But Aunt Josephine *did* eat one without a fork and then ate another. She sat on a rock, her pretty linen all crumpled and mussed, a great deal of sand

in her shoes, and balanced a paper plate on her lap and laughed, a rippling jolly laugh that Keineth had never heard before. She made Keineth and Peggy sit one on each side of her and tell her of all they had done during the summer.

When the last marshmallow had been toasted and the pans scoured and put away in the baskets, the picnickers gathered about the dying bonfires for a "sing-song." This always included all the songs they loved best, the songs Mr. and Mrs. Lee had known in their youth and the songs of the present day. And Aunt Josephine's rich contralto rang above the others.

"Why, I haven't sung like this since I can remember," she laughed. The children were just finishing, "There's a long, long trail a-winding, into the land o' my dreams!"

In the dim light Keineth was studying her aunt's face. Perhaps she had often been unkind in her thoughts; she might have known that Aunt Josephine must be very, very nice or she couldn't have been her father's sister! She slipped her hand into her aunt's and felt a warm pressure return her clasp.

When Mrs. Lee began "This is the End of a

Perfect Day" the children knew that the fun was over. They were glad to go home, for it had been a strenuous and exciting week.

When the good-nights were said Aunt Josephine drew Keineth toward her.

"May I keep her up a little longer—I would like to have a little talk."

A dread seized Keineth's heart, for she recalled her aunt's words concerning the Yellowstone. She might have to go with Aunt Josephine and Celeste and Kingston, after all.

Aunt Josephine sat down by the lamp, very straight, the way she always sat when she had something important on her mind. Mrs. Lee sank back among the pillows on the divan and Mr. Lee pulled his chair closer to the window and lighted his pipe.

"I cannot tell you," Aunt Josephine began, "how glad I am to have become acquainted with you all. I feel better about Keineth."

A silence followed this. Very troubled, Keineth glanced at Mrs. Lee, to find her smiling.

"You know I did not approve of the way my brother just turned her over to almost strangers. It seemed as if she ought to be with me. I would have

sent her to a camp in Maine—a very fine camp for girls—and then, perhaps had her with me at the seashore."

Aunt Josephine paused as though waiting for Mrs. Lee to say something. And Mrs. Lee said quietly:

"I think she has been happy here."

"I came this way intending to steal her for this Yellowstone trip, though perhaps she'd better not go." Keineth put her hand to her face involuntarily as though to cover the shameless freckles. "But I feel that I ought to talk over with you—well, the plans for her school in the fall." Keineth swept a frightened glance toward Mrs. Lee. Aunt Josephine went on in the voice she always used when doing her duty: "Miss Edgecombe has a very select school for girls a few blocks from me in New York. I know Miss Edgecombe well and she is holding a place open for Keineth. I feel she is a very suitable person to train a child. You know," with a tone of apology, "my brother had no sense at all in bringing up the girl! He left everything to that queer old governess."

Mrs. Lee suddenly sat up very straight on the divan.

"When Keineth came to us she had to learn to be like other children. Yes, she had been shut up too much with that very good governess; her little brain had grown faster than her body. It's her body's turn now, the brain can wait. Mr. Randolph said that he wished her to remain with us until he returned. Keineth and I have a plan of our own for the fall, to play and work on our music." She smiled at Keineth.

Aunt Josephine hesitated as though she could not find the right words to express what she felt. "I thought it was my duty to speak to Miss Edgecombe," she said stiffly; "she is my brother's child and will probably, some day, inherit what I have. I should like to have her with me, but," there was a wistful ring in her voice, "I suppose she is better off with you."

"The things Miss Edgecombe can teach her can wait, perhaps," Aunt Nellie answered, smiling down at Keineth. "Keineth is happy in our simple life——"

"Simple life—that's just it!" Aunt Josephine

spoke rapidly, as though Mrs. Lee had suddenly helped her to find the words she wanted. "You're so simple that you're wonderful! You've learned to live real lives without all the shams that make slaves of the rest of us. Why, my life seems as empty as a bubble and the things I do worth just about as much as a bubble by the side of this." She swept her hand out toward the lamp-lighted room. "And I must have lived like this once—but I've forgotten! I've always thought my brother queer and that governess he had insufferable—but I guess you and he know what's best. I'm glad the child is with you. Yes," the wistful note crept back into her voice, "I would have enjoyed having her, but, she's better off, all freckled and in those absurd clothes."

As Mrs. Winthrop drove away through the starlit night, a costly robe protecting her from the chill of the evening, Celeste at hand for instant service, Kingston guiding the monster car, she looked back over her shoulder at the little house outlined against the sky and sighed—a lonely little sigh.

In a tumult of joy Keineth had thrown her arms about Mrs. Lee's neck. "Oh, I was so frightened!" she cried. "Thank you for not letting me go. I'd

have just *hated* Miss Edgecombe's—after this! And I do want to stay with Peggy!" she finished with a tight hug. Then, as they climbed the stairs together, she said softly—without knowing why in the least she said it:

"Poor Aunt Josephine! It must be awful to be rich."

CHAPTER XVII

SCHOOL DAYS

SEPTEMBER had come, and busy days! For Overlook had to be closed, the city home cleaned and aired and made ready; Barbara must be sent away to college and the younger children started off in school.

"I feel all sort of queer inside," said Peggy, astride of a trunk, "the way you do when you hear sad songs. I wish it was always summer and nothing but play."

"And no school," chimed in Billy. He was on his knees packing toys. "I don't see what good school does, anyway! If nobody went to school it'd all be the same."

"I just hate beginning and then I love it," cried Alice.

"You won't love it when you get into fractions," retorted Billy, "'course its fun down in the baby grades!" He spoke from the lofty distinction of

a sub-freshman in the Technical High. Some day Billy was going to make boilers like his father.

"I don't mind school, but it's the fuss getting things ready. I just despise dressmakers! You wait, Ken, until mother gets after you and you stand by the hour and have Miss Harris fit you! The only fun is watching to see how many pins she can put in her mouth without swallowing any. Did that governess make your clothes?"

Keineth described the funny little shop where Tante took her twice a year. "They kept my measurements there and Tante would just look at the materials."

"And you never decided as to what color you wanted or had ribbons and things?" cried Peggy wonderingly.

Keineth's face colored a little. "Madame Henri thought plain things better," she explained.

"That's what mother says, but that plain things can be pretty, too. She always lets us choose our color because she says it trains our tastes. And this year, if I don't have a pink dress for best I'm going to make an awful fuss!"

"I'd like a pink dress," Keineth agreed shyly, "I never had one!"

Peggy jumped off the trunk.

"Let's tease for pink dresses just alike; and now what do you say to a last game of tennis?"

"Make it doubles! I'll play with Alice," cried Billy, eagerly dropping his work. And with merry laughter they rushed away.

To close Overlook was an almost sacred task to the Lee family. Each did his or her part tenderly, reluctantly. Mrs. Lee and Barbara folded away the pretty hangings; Billy made the garden ready for the fall fertilizing, took Gyp to his winter home at a nearby farm, and put the barn in order; the younger girls helped Nora polish and cover the kitchen utensils.

And never had the days seemed more glorious nor inviting, filled with the hazy September glow that turned everything into gold.

"It's always just the nicest when we have to go to the city," Peggy complained sadly. They were gathered for the last time on the veranda watching the sunset. On the morrow they would return to town. Mr. Lee looked over the young faces—the

tanned cheeks and the eyes glowing with health; the straight backs and limbs strong and supple from the summer's exercise.

"You're a fine-looking bunch to begin the winter's work," he laughed. "It ought to be very easy to you youngsters."

"How lucky we are to be able to live like this," Barbara said with a little sigh. She was thinking as she said it that she was often going to be very lonesome for home and this dear circle. Eager as she was to begin her new life in college, she could not bear the breaking of the home ties.

And bravely she had decided she would tell no one of this heartache, for one day she had surprised her mother gently crying over the piles of undergarments they had made ready. Mrs. Lee had tried to laugh as she wiped away her tears.

"I'm just foolish, darling, only it seems such a little while ago that you were a baby, my first baby—and here you are going off to college, away from me!"

So not for the world would Barbara have distressed her mother by showing the ache in her own

heart. In answer she had thrown her arms about her mother's neck in a passion of affection.

"I'll always, always, always love home best," she vowed.

And this would not be hard, for the Lees' home, made beautiful by love rather than wealth, was of the sort that would always be "home," and no matter how far one of them might travel or in what gay places linger, would always be "best of all!"

The Lees' city home was not at all like Keineth's old home in New York, nor like Aunt Josephine's pretentious house on Riverside Drive. Though it seemed right in the heart of the city and only a stone's throw from the business centre, it was on a quiet, broad street and had a little yard of its own all around it. The house was built of wood and needed painting, but the walks and lawns were neatly kept. Within it was simple and roomy, with broad halls and wide windows, shaded by the elms outside. Its walls were brown-toned, and yellow hangings covered the white frilled curtains at the windows. There was one big living-room, with rows and rows of bookshelves, easy chairs and soft rugs, a worn davenport in front of the fire, tables with

lamps, and books and magazines spread out upon them in inviting disorder. There were flowers here, too, as at Overlook, and Peggy's bird had its home in the big bay of the dining-room, where he welcomed each morning's sunshine with glad song.

Each little girl had a room of her own, too, hung with bright chintz, with covers on the bureau and bed to match. Peggy's and Keineth's had a door opening from one to the other. Billy with his beloved wireless and other things that Peggy called "truck" was happily established in the back of the house.

In a twinkling the entire family was settled in the city, "just as though we'd never been away," Peggy declared. Then two days later Barbara started off for college.

The parting was merry. The girls had helped her pack her trunks; sitting on her bed they had superintended the important process of "doing up" her hair; and then had taken turns carrying to the station the smart patent-leather dressing-case which had been her father's gift. Everyone smiled up to the last moment before the train pulled out of the station—then everyone coughed a great deal and

Mr. Lee blew his nose and Mrs. Lee wiped her eyes and Peggy sighed.

"I'd hate to be grown-up," she admitted, and as she walked away she held her mother's hand tightly.

Although Barbara's going made a great gap in the little circle, everyone was too busy to grieve. School began and with it home work; there was basket-ball and dancing school and shopping, hats and shoes to buy. Miss Harris arrived for her annual visit and much time was spent over samples and patterns. And Peggy and Keineth got their pink dresses! Then there were old friends to see, new ones to make and relatives to visit. In this whirl of excitement the Overlook days were soon forgotten!

With the city life a little of Keineth's shyness had returned. She felt lost among Peggy's many friends; the hours when Peggy was in school dragged a little. The simplicity of the Lees' city home had made her homesick for the big house in Washington Square—for its very emptiness! So because of this loneliness she spent hours at the piano eagerly practicing the technic that under Tante had been

so tiresome. Mrs. Lee had engaged one of the best masters in the city and Keineth went almost daily to his funny little studio. At first she had been a little afraid of him. He was a Pole, a round-shouldered man with long gray hair that hung over his collar and queer eyes that seemed to look through and through one. But after she had heard him play she lost her shyness, for in his music she heard the voices she loved. He called her "little one," and told her long stories of Liszt and Chopin and the other masters. "They are the people that live forever," he would say.

One rainy afternoon after school Peggy went to Keineth's room and found its door shut. Peggy was cross because a cold had kept her home from basket-ball, and she deeply resented this closed door.

"I s'pose you're doing something you don't want me to know." Her ear had caught the quick rustle of paper. In a moment Keineth had opened the door, but Peggy was turning away with a toss of her head.

"Oh, if you don't want me——"

"Please, Peg," begged Keineth. She pulled her

into the room. "I didn't know you were home, honest!"

Peggy glimpsed the corner of a paper half hidden under some books. Upon it were written bars of music.

"You *have* got a secret," she cried excitedly, "you're writing music! Keineth Randolph, if you don't tell your very best friend, now!"

Keineth, her face scarlet, drew out the tell-tale paper.

"It's just a little thing," she explained shyly. "Your mother showed me how to write last summer, but I wanted to surprise everybody. I was going to tell you, though, when it was done. Peg, I'm going to try to sell it!"

"Sell it! Get real money?" cried Peggy.

"Yes—that's what the masters did—only they were nearly always starving. 'Course I'm not, but I would like to earn some money."

"Oh, wouldn't it be fun?" Peggy caught Keineth's elbows and whirled her around. "What would you ever do with it? But where do you sell music? And what is its name?"

"I call it 'The Castle of Dreams,'" answered

Keineth with shining eyes. "And Mr. Cadowitz told me there's a music house right here in the city—Brown and Co."

"Let's go there together! Let's go *now!* Mother's away and it's just the time!"

The sore throat was forgotten. Peggy helped Keineth arrange the sheets in a little roll and together they started forth on their secret errand. They found the music house without any difficulty, but Keineth's courage almost failed her when she found herself confronted by a long line of clerks. To the one who came forward she explained her errand. She wanted to see the manager—she had some music she wished to sell!

At his amused glance her face flushed scarlet.

"Why, you're just a kid!" he answered impudently. "Mr. Brown's pretty busy!" Then it suddenly occurred to him that it would be something like a joke on the "boss" to take these two children to his busy office. The clerk was not overfond of the head of the firm.

"Well, come along," he concluded, winking at the other men.

He led the two girls through a labyrinth of offices and up a stairway to the manager's door.

"Two young ladies to see you!" he announced and shut the door of the office quickly behind him.

Keineth, frightened, had to swallow twice before she could make a sound. Then, holding the manuscript out, she explained her errand to the manager. Tipped back in his chair he listened with a smile; however, he took the roll from her and, opening it, glanced over it indifferently.

"Let me play it for you," begged Keineth desperately.

He led them into an inner room in the centre of which stood an open grand piano. Keineth went straight to it and began to play. He listened through to the end.

"Wait a moment;" he waved her back to the stool. "I want Gregory to hear you." The tone of his voice had changed.

In answer to a summons Gregory came in, a thin, tired-looking man. The manager turned to him:

"This girl has brought in some music! I want you to hear it," and he nodded to Keineth to begin.

She played it through again while the two men

held the manuscript between them and read as she played. The man called Gregory nodded again and again. His face had suddenly lost its tired look!

"Why, we've found a little gem!" Peggy heard him mutter. Then to Keineth: "What did you say your name was?" Keineth repeated it and the manager wrote it down with Mr. Lee's address. He took the sheets of music, rolled them, and put them in a drawer and locked it.

"We will consider it and let you know in a few weeks," he said. Then he shook hands with Keineth and Peggy. "And if you write anything more, please bring it to us."

"Oh, Peg, wouldn't it be grand if I could sell lots?" cried Keineth later, in an ecstasy of ambition.

"If I wasn't on the street I'd whoop," and Peggy squeezed her friend's arm. "Why, Ken—maybe you'll be a master!"

"And remember, don't tell a soul, Peg! Honor bright, cross your heart!"

"Honor bright, cross my heart!" Peggy promised.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTMAS

"CHRISTMAS isn't half as much fun after you don't believe in Santa Claus." Peggy heaved a mighty sigh as she worked her needle in and out of the handkerchief she was hemstitching. "How old were you, Keineth, when you found there wasn't a Santa Claus?"

Keineth did not answer for a moment. Her shining eyes had a far-away look. She did not know what to say to make Peggy understand that, as far back as she could remember, the beloved Santa and the Christmas Spirit and her Daddy had always seemed to be one and the same person. Always on Christmas morning her father had come to her bed, helped her hurry on her slippers and robe and had carried her on his back down the long stairway to the shadowy library where, on a table close to the fireplace, a-twinkle with tiny candles and bright with tinsel, they would find the tree he had trimmed. She could not bear to speak of it.

Instead she told Peggy of the way she and her father always spent Christmas Eve; how he would take her to a funny little restaurant where they would eat roast pig and little Christmas cakes and then go to the stores and wander along looking into the gaily-trimmed windows.

"You see there are ever and ever so many children near our home that never have any Christmas, and we used to wait for some to come and look into the window. Then Daddy'd invite them to go inside and pick out a toy. They'd be frightened at first, as if they couldn't believe it, but after they'd see Daddy smile they'd look so happy and talk so fast. Daddy always told them to pick out what they'd always wanted and never had, and the boys most always took engines and the girls wanted dolls —dolls with eyes that'd shut and open. Daddy and I used to think that was more fun than getting presents ourselves."

Mrs. Lee had listened with much interest. Her face, as she bent it over her needle-work, was serious.

"If I told you girlies of a family I ran across the other day, would you like to help make their Christmas a little merrier?"

They begged her to tell them.

Though Mrs. Lee never lacked time for the many demands of her family and friends, she was a woman who went about among the poor a great deal. Not like Aunt Josephine, who was the president of several charitable societies and sent her yellow car about the poorer parts of New York that Kingston might bestow for her deserving aid in places where she herself could not go—Mrs. Lee worked quietly, going herself into the homes of the sick and needy and carrying with her, besides warm clothing and food, the comfort and cheer that she gave to her own dear ones. No one could know just how much she did, because she rarely spoke of it.

" These people live in a tenement down near the river. The father was crippled in an explosion several years ago and the mother has to work to support her family. There are seven children—the oldest is fifteen. What do you think they do at Christmas—and they love Christmas just the way you do! They take turns having presents! And one of them has been very, very ill this fall, so Tim, whose turn it really is this year, is going to give up his Christmas for Mary. Isn't that fine in Tim?

Think of waiting for your turn out of seven and then giving it up."

Peggy threw down her work. "Oh, Mother, can't we make up a jolly basket for them all like we did for the Finnegans two years ago? And put in something extra for Tim because he's so—so fine?"

"That's just what I wanted you to say," and Mrs. Lee smiled at her little girl. "Make out a list of what you want to put in the basket and then when you get your Christmas money you can go shopping."

"Oh, what fun it will be to take the basket there! How old are the children, Mother?"

Peggy brought pencils and paper. The work was laid aside and the children commenced to make the list of things for the basket. Alice and Billy were consulted and agreed eagerly to their plans, Billy deciding that he would take the money he had been saving for a new tool set and with it buy a moving-picture machine for Tim.

Keineth had dreaded Christmas coming without her daddy. But there was so much to do and think about that she had no time to be unhappy. There was much shopping to do and the stores were so exciting. Mrs. Lee had given her the same amount

of spending money that Peggy had received and she and Peggy went together to purchase the things for the basket, besides other mysterious packages to be hidden away until Christmas morning. Then one evening there was a family council to decide just what they would do on Christmas.

"We always do this," whispered Peggy to Keineth as they sat close together, "and then we always do just what Alice wants us to do, 'cause she's the baby."

And Alice begged them all to hang up their stockings and to have a tree, if it was just a teeny, weeny one!

"We'll do it," Mr. Lee agreed, as if there had been a moment's doubt of it.

"I suppose we'll go on hanging up our stockings after we're doddering old grandparents," Mrs. Lee had laughed, though there was a suspicion of tears in her eyes.

"Mother and Daddy just spend all their time making everything jolly for us children," Peggy said afterwards. The children were sitting around the table, their school-books before them. "I just wish we could do something that'd be an awful

nice surprise for them." She stared thoughtfully at the blank paper before her on which a map ought to be.

"Let's do something on Christmas that they won't know about," suggested Alice.

"What?" put in Billy.

"Janet Clark's cousins have charades Christmas night."

"Oh, charades are stupid!" Billy hated guessing.

Peggy's pencil was going around in tiny circles. She was thinking very hard. Suddenly she sprang to her feet.

"I know! Ken, let's write a play!"

"A play!" cried the others.

"Yes. I've got it all in my head, now. Barb will help us when she comes home. You know Mother is going to invite Aunt Cora and Uncle Tom Jenkins and the Pennys over for dinner Christmas night; we'll surprise them with the play. Marian and Ted and the Penny girls can be in it! Oh, I've always wanted to act! Won't it be *fun!*"

Peggy's enthusiasm won instant support from the others. Because Peggy and Keineth had re-

cently attended a matinee performance of "The Midsummer Night's Dream," sitting in a box and wearing the new pink dresses, Billy and Alice conceded that they knew more about plays and must manage this. There were hours and hours then spent behind locked doors and Mrs. Lee could hear shrieks of laughter with Peggy's voice rising sternly above it. Now and then she caught glimpses of flying figures draped in pink and white, but because it was Christmas-time and the air full of mystery, she pretended to hear and see nothing.

Barbara returned four days before Christmas, very much of a young lady. Though her manner toward the younger children was at first a little patronizing, after a few hours at home it quickly gave way to the old-time comradeship. As soon as she could Peggy dragged her to her room and read to her the lines of the play which she and Keineth had scribbled on countless sheets of paper. Barbara promised to help. To guard the secret the last rehearsals were held at Marian Jenkins', under Barbara's coaching; and Billy and Ted Jenkins printed the programs on Ted's printing press.

"Oh, it's going to be the best part of Christmas," Keineth cried delightedly.

But it was not quite the best, for on Christmas morning, after the children had returned from taking their basket to Tim and his family, Keineth found a cablegram from her Daddy, wishing her a merry, merry Christmas!

Somehow, after that, it seemed as if her joy was complete!

The gifts that the Lee children had found in their stockings had been very simple; beside them the elaborate presents that had come in a box from Aunt Josephine seemed vulgar and showy, although Barbara had cried out in delight at her bracelet. To Keineth and Peggy she had sent tiny wrist watches, circled with turquoise.

"Much too lovely for children like you," had been Mrs. Lee's comment.

While Mrs. Lee was helping Nora prepare the dinner the children put the finishing touches to their costumes and with much whispering arranged the stage for the play. The little tree around which the play must be acted had been put at one end of the long living-room; the door close to it on the right,

leading into the hall, would serve as a stage entrance. The only property needed was a rock, and by covering it with a strip of gray awning, the piano stool would look very real.

At six o'clock Aunt Cora and Uncle Tom, Marian and Ted arrived; a little later all the Pennys. Eighteen sat down at the table that creaked with the good things Mrs. Lee and Nora had prepared. Everyone talked at once. Keineth, looking down the length of the room, decked with the holly the children had fastened over doors and windows, thought that nowhere could Christmas be merrier than right there at the Lees! And what helped make the merriment was the comforting thought that Tim and his family were eating a Christmas dinner, too!

At eight o'clock Peggy stole quietly to her mother.

"May we children go up to the playroom, Mummy? It'd be more fun there," she whispered. Mrs. Lee nodded.

The playroom was really a part of the attic, partitioned off and lighted. Here the children donned the cheesecloth costumes they had made. There was a great deal of laughter; Peggy was giving

orders to everyone at once! Barbara sat on a trunk pinning wings to fairies' shoulders. And at the last moment Marian brought out some real make-up stuff she had borrowed!

Then Billy, in a clown's robe made out of an old pair of night-drawers and a great deal of paper, went downstairs to give out the programs.

"Oh, do I *look* like a real actress?" whispered Peggy to Keineth, wildly pulling at her tinsel crown.

"Just beautiful!" Keineth whispered back. "But oh, I'm so scared! I know I won't remember a *single* line!"

CHAPTER XIX

WHEN THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT WORKED OVERTIME

PEALS of laughter greeted Billy's appearance in the living-room. Then everyone read the programs he gave them.

"The rascals!" cried Mr. Lee, genuinely surprised.

"Look at this," whispered Mrs. Lee, pointing to the program.

For at its top was printed in large letters:

WHEN THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT WORKED OVERTIME

BY

PEGGY LEE AND KEINETH RANDOLPH

And the rest of the program read:

The Time of the Play:

Christmas night after the children are supposed to have gone to bed, a little ill from their Christmas candies, and when the grownfolks have gathered together to talk over the day and declare that it's the best Christmas the children have ever had.

The Place:

The living-room at home. And if possible the room should be darkened, except for the lights on the tree, but if this is not convenient it doesn't matter in the least, for the Christmas Spirit is not afraid to walk into the most brightly-lighted room!

The Persons who are in the Play:

The Christmas Spirit	Peggy Lee
The Christmas Fairies:	
Happyheart	Keineth Randolph
Peace	Marian Jenkins
Goodwill	Sally Penny
Merrylips	Fanny Penny
Joy	Anne Penny
Spirit of Childhood	Alice Lee
Jesters	William Lee, Jr. Edward Jenkins

"I recognize Barbara's hand assisting," laughed Mr. Lee, as he read through the program.

"Sh—h!" The chatter suddenly ceased. Barbara pressed a button that shut off all the lights excepting the twinkling bulbs on the tree. In another room the children sang "Silent Night." As the last sweet note died away, Peggy, in gauzy white with tinsel crown and wings, came slowly into the room. She sank down upon the rock. The play had begun.

Spirit (yawns): Goodness me, how tired I am! (Yawns again.) It seems as if there are more children every Christmas. I think after to-night I'll go to bed for a whole year! (Lifts her head suddenly and looks at the tree.) Why, there are no presents on the tree! It must be a party of grownfolks! (Sighs.) I do feel so sorry for grownfolks! They always have to pretend they're having a Christmas. (Springs to her feet.) Perhaps they're here now. (Looks intently at audience.) Yes—they are! I can always tell when grownfolks are around, because I have to work so much harder with them. I must call my fairies. (Spirit steps toward door, puts her hand cup-shape to her mouth.)

Come, oh Christmas fairies all,
Answer to the Spirit's call!

(As she calls the fairies Happyheart, Merrylips, Goodwill, and Peace dance into the room, curtsey low to the Spirit and group themselves about her.)

Spirit (holds out welcoming hands): Ah, fairies, what a wonderful day this has been! Did you fill the stockings, Happyheart?

Happyheart: I've filled a million stockings!

Spirit: Splendid! And you, Merrylips?

Merrylips: I've trimmed a million trees—small ones and big ones!

Spirit: Didn't you love it? They smell so good! How went the day with you, Goodwill?

Goodwill: Oh, I've carried baskets of food until I am sure there was not a hungry person in the whole wide world!

Spirit: Tell us, Peace, of your work to-day!

Peace: I have gone about since early morning putting songs in people's hearts!

Spirit: You worked well! I have heard the music all day long!

Merrylips (yawns): We're terribly tired!

Spirit (sternly): Hush! Fairies must never be tired when there is work to do! See, I have found a tree! It has these pretty lights but there are no presents!

Happyheart: Who's tree can it be?

Spirit: It is a tree for some grownfolks! You see the children all over the land must have been put to bed a long time ago.

Peace (nods her head): Grownfolks generally do stay up late Christmas night!

Happyheart: They get very sad wishing they were children again!

Merrylips: Christmas is very hard on them, poor things!

Spirit: The men talk about spending so much money and the women sit up late nights stitching and stitching and complaining that they will not give anything but cards another Christmas.

Merrylips: How foolish they are!

Peace: They forget that we will help them!

Happyheart: You see they don't believe in fairies! It's because they are so old! Why, they say that some are over thirty!

Goodwill: As if that mattered!

Spirit: But I do feel very sorry for them! They can

scarcely remember when they used to hang up their stockings! They will come and gather around this tree and there will be no presents!

Happyheart (sits down upon stool): Oh, dear! (Drops her chin in her hand.) Can't we do something?

Peace: Let's think hard!

Goodwill (sadly): Our real presents are gone. There were so many children this year!

Merrylips: And they make out such long lists! Why, the trees would scarcely hold all the things!

Spirit: We must do what we can to make Christmas merry for these grownfolks.

Happyheart (claps her hands): I can make their hearts light!

Goodwill: I can make them kindly to one another!

Merrylips: I can make them laugh!

Peace: And I can put one of my songs in their hearts!

Spirit (as others make these suggestions she turns toward the tree, deep in thought; suddenly she wheels around): Your gifts are priceless but, somehow, I wish we had something besides them for these grownfolks!

Goodwill: I should like to make this a Christmas they would remember the year through!

Happyheart: I should like to teach them to believe in fairies!

Peace: Perhaps if we could fill their tree with gifts they would not forget!

Merrylips: Let's ask Joy!

Spirit: Where is she?

Happyheart: Oh, she is still working. But if we sing her song she will come!

Merrylips: Let's sing, then! (Holds up her finger.) One, two, three! (All sing softly the Christmas Carol, "Joy to the World." As they sing Joy runs into the room. The fairies circle about her.)

Joy (stepping to the foreground and stretching arms): Oh, I am so tired!

Spirit (steps forward and lays her hand on Joy's shoulder): Poor little Joy-fairy!

Joy: I've been so busy making happiness! This funny world needs so much of it and everyone wants something different! And there were so many children! (Turns to the tree.) What—another tree?

Spirit: Yes, and we have no presents! Happyheart can make their hearts light and Peace can give them a song, but, you know, I'd just like to have them have some presents—like children have!

Merrylips (dances a step or two): Fairy presents would be fun! They are more fun than real presents and can make wishes come true!

Goodwill: They say grownfolks are worse than children about making wishes, only they keep their wishes locked up!

Happyheart: Wouldn't it be lovely?

Joy: I know—let's call the Spirit of Childhood!

Happyheart: Splendid! She will surely know a way!

Spirit: How can we call her, Joy-fairy?

Joy: Put your fingers over your eyes tight! (All put their fingers over their eyes.) Now, say after me—"Spirit of Childhood, come at our call!"

Chorus:

Spirit of Childhood, come at our call,
Spirit of Childhood, come at our call!

(As they repeat this the Spirit of Childhood dances joyously into the room and faces them. As they remove their fingers from their eyes, they bow low.)

Chorus: Childhood!

Childhood (faces audience): I am the Spirit of Childhood! I am the happiest fairy of all! I am known all over this wide, wide world! Everybody loves me! Sometimes I am a dream, too, and I come out of the past when it is very still and creep into old, old hearts!

Happyheart (impatiently): We know all that!

Spirit (steps toward Childhood): We want you to help us now, Childhood, to make Christmas merry for this party of grownfolks.

Childhood: No children? They're all grownfolks?

Spirit: No children. They're all grownfolks.

Childhood: Poor things! How sad!

Spirit: But they have a tree and we want to give them gifts which, because they are fairy gifts, will make their best every-day wish come true!

Childhood: Yes—they'll think, because they are grownups, they must have useful gifts! But they shall have fairy gifts!

Happyheart (to other fairies): I told you she'd help us!

Merrylips: And these grownfolks must make a big, big wish and have it on top of their hearts! Then, if they carry their gifts in the bottom of their pockets their wishes will come true!

Childhood: I will call my Jesters! They are clever knaves—they will find the gifts!

Happyheart: Call them quickly!

Childhood: I have to do very funny things, because I am Childhood, you know. (She dances backward and forward across the room, with merry step; pirouettes and points finger into audience.) Some one out there must laugh, or the Jesters will not think we are merry. Laugh, someone, laugh! Harder! I am Childhood! Laugh with me! (As she speaks some one in the audience laughs; others join.)

Childhood (runs to door):

Jester big, jester small,
Come at Childhood's merry call!

(Jesters enter—stand near door.)

Chorus: Welcome—welcome!

Childhood (to Jesters): Go—find and bring us the biggest Christmas stocking in the world! It must be filled with fairy gifts! (Jesters hurry out.)

Goodwill: How will we know which gifts to give each person?

Childhood: Oh, I will look in my Book of the Past! You see I have to keep careful records of everybody!

Spirit: Why it's just like Santa Claus used to do when the old-fashioned children believed in him!

Happyheart: He was a fine man!

Spirit: Ah, here they come!

(Enter Jesters dragging behind them an enormous Christmas stocking made of red cambric. They give it to the Christmas Spirit, then step back to the door.)

Childhood (as others gather around the stocking): Go, Jesters, and bring me my Book of Records!

Happyheart: Open it quickly! (Spirit opens stocking—all peep in.) Oh, lots and lots of gifts!

(Jester returns, gives book to Childhood who goes to the right of group and stands next to Happyheart.)

Childhood (solemnly to audience): Are all the grownups ready? Have they got their best wish on top of their hearts?

Happyheart: Is every one happy?

Goodwill: Do you all feel very, very kind to one another?

Peace: Do you know my songs?

Childhood: Then let's have a bright light so that we may begin!

(Lights of the room flash on.)

(Spirit takes packages one by one from the stocking and reads the name. Then she holds the package while Happyheart reads from Childhood's Record what the book has to say of each person. After this has been read Joy with dancing step takes the fairy package to the person named. This goes on until every one in the audience has received a gift.)

Spirit (throws stocking down): The stocking is empty!

Happyheart: The fairy gifts are all gone!

Childhood (shakes finger at audience): But each one of you has a wish that will come true, just as sure as sure can be; for you have received a fairy gift!

Happyheart: And now they will be happy!

Goodwill (claps her hands together as if with a happy thought): Let us send the Jesters to bring in to them the Christmas Bowl! If they drink our fairy brew they will never, never forget this Christmas!

Happyheart: And they will always believe in the Christmas Spirit!

Spirit: And in the Christmas Fairies!

Goodwill: Go, Jesters, and bring in to them the Christmas Bowl! (Jesters go out quickly.)

Spirit: Now, fairies, we must stop our work! We've worked overtime already, and you know there is an eight-hour law now for fairies.

Merrylips: Yes, but we've helped these poor grownfolks!

Happyheart: Let us say farewell to them! Now, one—two—three!

Chorus (waving hands):

May the brew that we've mixed you make every heart light,
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!

(Fairies dance out, followed by the Spirit. Jesters, blowing horns, enter the room, bearing a tray upon which is placed a punch bowl filled with Nora's best cider punch.)

* * * * * * *

Loud applause demanded the return of the fairies and then all gathered in a merry group around the

punch bowl while Mr. Lee toasted the youthful cast.

"I suspect you, Miss Bab, of a hand in those records," he cried, shaking a finger at Barbara. A paper crown was set rakishly on his head.

Behind the laughter in Mrs. Lee's eyes was shining something very like tears as she drew little Alice to her. Across the brightly-crowned heads of the children her glance caught Mr. Lee's.

"I feel as if my heart *had* been brushed by fairy wings to-night," she said with a happy sigh.

CHAPTER XX

SHADOWS

"WILLIAM, it *can't* be true!"

Keineth, pausing on the threshold of the dining-room door, overheard the words. Peggy and Billy had gone to school; she was starting out for her music lesson and had stopped to ask Aunt Nellie a question. The tone of Aunt Nellie's voice, the seriousness of Mr. Lee's face, made Keineth's heart turn cold with fear!

"Aunt Nellie." They both turned towards her, startled. Involuntarily Mrs. Lee slipped the newspaper she had been reading under her napkin.

"Keineth, dear!" She held out her hand, her eyes filling with tears.

Keineth stood quite still, looking from one to the other, and because he was always somewhere very close in her mind and heart she cried "Daddy!"

Mrs. Lee had a curiously helpless look, as if she scarcely knew what to say, and with one hand she still held the paper beneath her napkin. Mr. Lee's

voice was husky, he had to clear it two or three times before he could speak, and all the while Keineth's great eyes were fastened gravely upon him, demanding the truth.

"It may be a false report, my dear. There's been an accident at sea, and according to the paper——"

"My daddy was in it!" cried Keineth, putting her hands to her face. "Was my daddy in it?" she demanded in a queer little voice.

"Come here, dear," Mrs. Lee held out her hand again, but Keineth did not stir.

"Was he—in—it?" she demanded again.

"His name was listed among the passengers sailing from Liverpool, but there may have been a mistake."

Keineth's eyes were blazing. She walked to the table.

"Please give me that paper, Aunt Nellie! I have a right to know what it says!" She did not seem like the child she was as she stood there, white-faced. Her voice was very calm. Aunt Nellie handed her the paper; as she did so she said pleadingly: "Keineth, why not wait until your Uncle

William has found out if it is true?" But Keineth did not hear her; she slowly unfolded the paper, stared a moment at the headlines, then, turning, rushed with it from the room.

There it was—his name! Her finger found it and stopped, as though she cared nothing for the rest! She read the big letters of the headlines, the few words that told of the attack by a German submarine on the big passenger ship, of the horrible confusion of the few moments before it sank, of the wild panic of the cowardly and the splendid bravery of a few! Then: "John Randolph, of New York City, the well-known journalist, abroad on a special mission for the President of the United States, was among the passengers."

Keineth, on her knees, with the paper spread out before her, read and reread the words. They sounded so final! He was gone—her daddy was gone!

And yet—how could this happen to her in this way? She knew a little of death; way back in her memory was a haunting picture of her own mother's going, of her father's grief and the music and the flowers. And she had watched the funeral of

Francesca's baby brother from behind the geranium boxes. There had been music then, too. But this was so different—just the lines in the newspaper and then nothing more, ever and ever and ever! It couldn't happen like that! She was too puzzled to cry. There were so many questions she wanted to ask—how deep *was* the ocean there? Couldn't they swim? And whom could she ask who would tell her all about it?

She heard the door open, but did not turn her head. She felt Aunt Nellie's arms lift her, draw her head close to her breast. Aunt Nellie's voice was very tender.

"Uncle William has gone to telegraph immediately to the New York offices of the steamship line. We may learn more, my dear. You must be brave—you know how brave your father always was."

Almost violently Keineth pushed her away.

"I don't believe it!" she cried. Seizing the paper, she tore it into little bits and threw them fiercely to the floor.

"I'll never, never, nev-er believe it! He *will* come back!" And poor Keineth threw herself upon

her bed and covered her face tight with her hands She had caught the look of deep pity on Aunt Nellie's face. Aunt Nellie believed it! She could not bear it!

"Please go away," she begged through her fingers. And Aunt Nellie slipped out of the room, closing the door softly behind her.

Keineth could shut from her eyes Aunt Nellie's pity, but she could not shut from her mind the flood of thoughts that came. Cruel thoughts, too, which her persistent "I don't believe it" failed to drive away! She had seen a picture once of a sinking ship; a great wave of water had engulfed it, men were clinging to its side like flies! She remembered it now! Remembered, too, an awful storm when, holding her daddy's hand, she had watched from a high point of land the angry sea surging over the rocks far beneath them. It was green and black and white where the water hissed, and its roar had made her shiver! That was the same sea! "Oh, I don't believe it!" she whispered. She had made so many pictures in her mind of her father's home-coming—she had felt sure he would surprise her! She had thought that perhaps she might go back to the old house and find him there, or go with someone to the

dock and watch his boat come in and see him waving from its deck! Perhaps she might be standing some afternoon in the living-room window looking down the street watching Terry light the street lamps and suddenly see him walking towards her! And now—oh, it just couldn't be true!

At noon Mr. Lee came home to luncheon. The newspaper report had been confirmed by the New York offices of the steamship company. He said this very gravely and slowly, as though he hated to speak the words. Peggy sat watching Keineth in a frightened sort of way; she wished Keineth would cry so that she could put her arms around her to comfort her! But Keineth only sat very still staring down at her plate.

"I think I'll practice, Aunt Nellie," Keineth said when the luncheon was finished. She had to do something. She walked out of the room as she spoke. Peggy cast an entreating look toward her mother.

"Mummy, isn't it dreadful? What *will* we do? She acts so queer!"

Mrs. Lee answered very slowly. "Keineth will not believe it, Peggy! But when she does, when her

loss comes to her, we must help her in every way! We must make her feel how much we love her and that she is one of us!"

"Why, what if it was our daddy," Peggy cried. "Listen!"

For from across the hall came wonderful music—not the lesson Keineth should be practicing, but fairy things! And happy notes, too, as though Keineth's own hands were trying to dispel the heavy shadows about her and give her comfort and hope!

Mr. Lee was carefully reading the report of the disaster in the afternoon paper.

"You know it's a funny thing—no one on the boat had seen John Randolph! Maybe——"

"Oh, maybe he got left!" cried Billy, who all through the tragic moments had been unusually silent.

Suddenly the doorbell rang. Its clang startled each one of them! The music across the hall stopped with a crash! They heard Keineth flying to the door.

In a moment she returned, holding a yellow envelope in her hand. Though it was addressed to her she carried it to Mr. Lee.

"Please read it," she said in a trembling voice. "I think it is from Daddy! I—can't!"

Peggy crossed quickly to Keineth's side and put one arm close about her. Mr. Lee tore open the cablegram, read the lines written in it, tried to speak and, failing, put the sheet of paper in Keineth's hands.

"Oh!" Keineth cried. "Oh!" Something like a laugh caught in her throat.

> Changed plans—did not sail on boat. Thank God!
>
> JOHN RANDOLPH.

Both of Peggy's arms flew around her now; they hugged one another and both cried. And Aunt Nellie was crying, too, and Mr. Lee had to wipe his eyes. Billy was saying over and over, "Didn't I just have a hunch, now?"

The shadows lifted from their hearts, the children listened while Mr. Lee read to them the full account of the disaster which had stirred every nation of the globe. Billy and Peggy asked many questions, but Keineth was very silent. There were other little girls whose fathers had gone down into the sea—her heart went out to them in deepest pity.

"I feel as though this morning was weeks ago," she said afterwards as she and Peggy curled upon the window seat with some sewing. From outside the sun was shining through the bare branches of the trees, making dancing figures on the polished floor. Keineth sighed. "It makes one realize how unhappy lots and lots of people are."

"And it makes you feel as though you could do *anything* to help them," answered Peggy, staring thoughtfully out of the window where on the city street humanity surged backward and forward in all the forms of joy and sorrow known by God's children.

CHAPTER XXI

PILOT GOES AWAY

PILOT's dog-life had fallen into pleasant paths. His days were one happy round of comfortable hours, spent close to the big fireplace or at Billy's heels. He slept on an old blanket in the hallway outside of Billy's door. His friends were Billy's friends and their dogs—Pilot was loyal and democratic to the end of his stubby tail. His duties were few and pleasant—to guard his master and his master's family, to keep the next-door cat away from his door and to inspect daily the refuse barrels in the backyards of his street. If he had a sorrow it was that he could not go to school with the children, but he always went with them to the corner, lifted his paw for a parting shake, watched them disappear from sight, and trotted home to wait for the hour when they would return. Twice daily Nora fed him choice scraps and bones which he ate from a plate in the back hall, and if occasionally someone spoke sharply to him or rebuked him for thought-

lessly lying upon one of the chairs or the davenport, the sting was always softened by a pat on his head. What hardships he had had in the past had been forgotten—he had no concern for the future!

Of course Pilot could not always understand the language his master spoke. He read mostly by signs. So, one morning, when he saw Billy and Peggy and Keineth making preparations for some out-of-door pleasure, he stood eagerly at Billy's heels, wagging his tail to tell his master that he was ready, too.

"We can't take him on the street-car," Peggy complained.

"And he might get lost in the woods," Keineth added.

Now Pilot could not know that the children were putting on heavy rubbers and warm sweaters under their coats because they were going to "hike" into the woods to see if the sap was beginning to run. And from their excited remarks he could not reason that, to get to the woods, they would have to take the street-car to the city line and dogs were not allowed on the street-cars. It was Saturday, and Saturday to Pilot meant a whole day with Billy! So

when they were quite ready he dashed ahead to the door.

"You can't go Pilot. Go back!" Billy said sternly.

He stood very still and watched them disappear through the door, giving only one little whimper. They did not even say good-by; he heard their merry voices slowly die away. Then he lay down on the floor with one eye on the closed door.

But even the most faithful will not wait forever. The sound of Nora's step coaxed him into the kitchen. It was quite nice there—the sun was shining across the white floor and something on the stove smelled very good. Nora was singing, too, which meant that he could coax a little and get in her way. After a while she gave him a whole cookie—he felt happier!

A little later, having wandered several times through the empty rooms of the house and found no one, he started out of doors in search of some amusement. He chased the cat to the veranda roof from which she refused to descend. He saw a friend of Billy's, so he left the cat to walk with him to the corner. He carefully examined some boxes that

were piled there, then he made friends with a stray terrier who stopped to exchange greetings with him. Pilot liked the terrier, together they trotted down the street, block after block.

He did not notice a big limousine car that passed and re-passed him—to him these motor cars were of no interest excepting to keep out from under their wheels. But when it stopped suddenly at the curb and an old man climbed out, calling "Jacky, Jacky!" he paused.

The old man was beckoning to his chauffeur and talking in an excited voice.

"Come and look at him! I know it's Jacky," he was saying.

At the name a memory stirred in Pilot's mind. He advanced slowly to the man. The man held out his hand and called again, "Jacky," and Pilot went to him and laid his nose in the palm of the man's hand.

"It's Jacky, it's Jacky," the old man cackled. "He'd always do that when I called him! Look at his ears—one got torn and I had a stitch taken in it! Look and see, Briggs, my eyes are so bad."

Briggs pushed back the hair on Pilot's ears and found the scar. The old man was very joyful.

"He was stolen from me two years ago! Look on his collar, Briggs."

Briggs read aloud the address on the collar.

"We'll take him there right away, Briggs! Come on, Jacky, my boy!"

But Pilot considered this going a little too far—he objected, at which the man Briggs lifted him and placed him in the automobile. He was far too polite to struggle for his freedom, but he put his paws upon the door and barked a vigorous protest.

Mrs. Lee had just returned from shopping and answered the bell herself. Across her mind flashed immediately the explanation of the strange group on her doorstep. In a few words she told the old man the story of Pilot's coming into their family. As he listened he nodded several times.

"I cared more for that dog than anything on earth," he told her. "He was always with me! When he was stolen I couldn't get over it, Madam—just couldn't get over it! Felt as if I'd lost my only friend!"

Mrs. Lee wished she could feel sympathetic, but she was thinking of Billy!

"Now let him go, Briggs, and you watch him, Madam!"

Briggs released his hold of Pilot's collar, Pilot leaped upon Mrs. Lee joyfully, tore down the length of the hall and back and then stood a little apart, eyeing suspiciously the strange group.

"Come, Jacky, come Jacky!" cackled the old man, holding out his hand.

And Pilot, above all else, was faithful! Slowly, reluctantly, he went towards the outstretched hand and laid his nose in it.

"Always did that when I called him! See his ear, Madam—I had a stitch taken in it when he tore it! See the scar?"

There was no doubt in Mrs. Lee's mind but that the dog belonged to the man.

"My children are going to be heartbroken," she commenced slowly. "Could we buy——"

The old man snorted angrily. "Buy Jacky? Don't you know he's a very valuable dog? And anyway, you haven't enough money to buy his companionship from me! Your children can get another

dog, Madam, but for me there is only one Jacky!" As he spoke with fumbling fingers he drew out a card and a dollar bill. "Pay the boy his dollar, Madam. Take him down, Briggs. Very sorry, Madam, but good-day!"

Briggs pulled on the collar and Pilot went down the steps very slowly. He knew in his dog-mind that something was happening! He turned and looked appealingly at Mrs. Lee. She was standing very still and was not helping him at all! He tried to tell her to tell Billy that he had to do his duty and when this man called him Jacky he knew he had to go, but he would always love his young master best!

So when the children returned to the house, cheeks red with the wind, splashed with mud, tired and happy, there was no Pilot to greet them!

Mrs. Lee told them the story; tried to tell it in such a way that the children would feel sorry for the lonely old man who had been so happy at finding his dog!

But Billy raged—his high-pitched voice choking over the sob that struggled in his throat. He threw the dollar and the card savagely to the floor.

"Wouldn't you have thought the old thing would

have at least given Billy a reward!" cried Peggy indignantly.

Though she did not answer this, Mrs. Lee smiled, as she recalled the reluctance with which the old man had extracted even the one-dollar bill from his pocket.

"I don't want any old reward—I just want Pilot! If we hadn't gone away and left him that old man would never have found him," Billy wailed.

"Couldn't we buy him, Mother?"

"The dog is worth a great deal of money. I'm afraid we could scarcely afford it, my dear, even if the man would part with him. Billy must look at the thing in a sensible way." She laid her hand on Billy's shoulder. "Pilot will miss you as much as you do him, my son! But you have a great many other things to make you happy and I should judge that that old man had nothing!"

Keineth went up to her room to take off her muddy shoes. On her bureau she found a letter Nora had placed there. In the corner of the envelope was printed in large letters: "Brown and Company." She tore it open with fingers trembling with excitement.

It was from the music publishers, telling her that they would publish her "Castle of Dreams," and for its purchase had enclosed a check.

And Keineth, unfolding the small slip of paper, saw written there: "The Sum of Twenty-five Dollars."

"Peggy! Peg-gy!"

CHAPTER XXII

KEINETH'S GIFT

TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS! To Keineth it seemed like a fortune!

She had never thought much about money. She knew some people were very poor—she had often felt sorry for them as she watched them near the Square in New York. And she knew some were very rich, for Aunt Josephine talked of them. She had always had all the money she wanted, because she had never wanted very much. She supposed Peggy and the others had all they wanted, too. Each week Mr. Lee gave to each one of them a small allowance and whenever they managed to save anything from this each of them put it in her bank. Keineth supposed that the Lees were not as rich as Aunt Josephine and not as poor as Francesca's family next door to her old home, but it didn't seem to matter at all, because she did not think that the Lees wanted to be rich, anyway. They never talked of anything in terms of dollars and cents!

KEINETH'S GIFT

Twenty-five dollars—that seemed enough to Keineth to buy everything anyone could want!

Keineth and Peggy had carefully kept the precious secret of the "Castle of Dreams." For a few weeks they had watched the mail each day, then the holiday fun had filled their minds and the secret was forgotten. As the weeks passed and Keineth heard nothing she had almost given up all hope of selling her music and her great ambitions had taken a sad fall. Peggy had urged her to consult her music master about it, but after one or two attempts Keineth found she had not the courage.

And now a check had come! Twenty-five whole dollars!

"Peggy! Peggy!" she called, unable to wait one moment to share the good news.

It was a very excited family that listened to their story at dinner time. Even Billy, red-eyed, forgot his own sorrow. Everyone had to hold the check and read it! Then each one suggested some way for Keineth to spend her money!

And as is the way with all fortunes, sooner or later they become a burden! Already, even while they made merry over the check, Keineth was be-

ginning to worry as to what she should do with it! Of course Mr. Lee had advised her putting it in the bank, but that did not seem like much fun! If Daddy were at home she would buy something for him with it or she might send it to Tante to help the poor children that were suffering from the war.

"Give it to the Red Cross!" Peggy suggested grandly.

"Buy a bicycle!" said Alice, "or one of those cunning electric stoves that we can cook on!"

"If I had it I'd buy Pilot!" put in Billy sadly.

"I'd like to do something with it," said Keineth slowly, "that would make somebody just awfully happy, because——" She looked down the length of the table and realized suddenly how dear to her these Lees had grown and what this home was to her. "Because I'm so happy here!"

And even while she was speaking she decided just what she would do! But she would tell no one, not even Peggy!

She would buy Pilot for Billy! Mrs. Lee had said they could not afford it! What good luck that her check had come just at the right time!

After dinner she searched for and found the old man's card. It was soiled and crumpled from Billy's angry fingers. She hid it away with the check. She must wait until Monday.

Keineth had to ride on the street-car a very long way before she reached the address which the card gave. Then she found herself before a great iron fence and had to ring twice before the big gate in the fence opened. It opened quite by itself and it clanged shut behind her, startling her with its noise. There seemed to be a million steps leading to the big bronze door and her feet moved like tons of lead! She had to ring again. The door swung back and a sour-faced man in dark livery faced her.

"Is—is Mr. Grandison at home?" she asked in a voice so strange that she scarcely recognized it herself.

The sour-faced man looked very hard at her.

"Who is it, miss?" he asked wonderingly, as though few people came to that door for Mr. Grandison.

"I'm Keineth Randolph. I must see him, please!"

"He never sees anyone, miss, but you can go in. Only I wouldn't advise you to bother him very much because he's bad this morning with his rheumatism!"

He was telling her this in a whisper as he led her through the long hall. Keineth thought it quite the longest, widest hall she had ever seen and she walked very fast past the big doors that opened into dark empty rooms that looked like great caverns! If a giant, bending his great head, had leaped through one of the heavy door-frames she would have thought it quite to be expected!

The servant drew back a door and Keineth saw a long room full of books. At the other end, close to a table, sat an old, old man. Then she saw something move suddenly and Pilot dashed at her from a corner and leaped upon her with great whimpering, licking her hands and face and even her shoes.

"What's this? Come here, Jacky! Who are you? Who let you in here?" roared the old man, glaring at Keineth.

Keineth, terribly frightened, advanced slowly towards him, one hand on the dog's head.

"I live at the Lees' where you found Pilot. We all miss him so terribly, especially Billy, that I came to buy him back!"

"You did, did you? Well, nobody has money enough to buy him."

Keineth was so indignant at his disagreeable manner that she forgot her fright.

"I know the Lees haven't money enough, because they have so many children and buy lots of things for them and give them a good time! But I'm going to buy Pilot for them! I know Pilot couldn't be happy here, anyway, it's so—so big and horrid and you're so—cross—after having a happy home with the Lees!"

Pilot, as though to tell her that was very true, snuggled his nose under her arm and wagged his tail.

"I've got twenty-five dollars," finished Keineth triumphantly, "and I can spend all of it because I earned it myself—writing music!"

He turned and looked hard at her. Her fury seemed to have amused him.

"Music—you write music! A child like you!"

Keineth stepped closer to him.

"Yes. Do you like music?"

The old man answered very slowly. "It was all I cared for once upon a time! Let me see your eyes!" He reached out a wrinkled hand and drew her towards him. "They are blue—like hers were! Child, years and years ago I loved a young girl very much—and she taught me to love music! But she went out of my life and left me with nothing but loneliness!"

Keineth thought of the great empty house and felt very sorry for him.

"What was her name?" she asked softly.

"A pretty name—like she was!" he muttered, his eyes fastened on the child's face. It was as if something he saw there was awakening the memories. "It was Keineth."

"Why, that is my name!"

"Keineth—Keineth what?" he cried.

"Keineth Randolph."

"You are John Randolph's girl—her son's girl."

"You mean my grandmother? That—lady—you loved was my daddy's mother?"

The old man was half laughing, half crying.

He held Keineth's arms with his trembling fingers.

"Of course—the same blue eyes—and music! How your grandmother loved music! How her fingers could play, make sounds that'd tear the heart right out of you!" He shook his head. "And she wouldn't have me—my money couldn't buy her! After she died I stood in the Square and watched them take her away from the house—saw the flowers I had sent go with her! I saw the man she had chosen instead of me walk out, too. He had two children by the hand—the little fellow was your father. I went away from New York then——" He drew his hands across his eyes as though to brush away the haunting pictures. "And you're Keineth!" he finished.

Keineth told him of her daddy and of her coming from New York to live with the Lees until her father returned. She had almost forgotten Pilot in her deep sympathy for this lonely old man who had loved her father's mother—and had loved her for so many, many years! But Pilot suddenly barked!

"Pilot thinks he belongs to us because he once saved my life," Keineth explained, going on, then,

to tell the story of her narrow escape from drowning. Perhaps the old man heard her, though his face still wore a far-away look as if he had not yet been able to bring himself back from that dear past the child's eyes had awakened.

"And so I'd like to buy him, please," Keineth finished, laying her check before him.

For a long time the old man stared at it, while Keineth and Pilot waited.

"He loves you better than he does me! You're right—he wasn't happy here—he's cried and cried! I can't keep even a dog's love! Take him." He slowly lifted the check, read it, turned it over, folded it and put it in his pocket.

Then Keineth felt very sorry for the old man. She felt, too, that now in some way or other he belonged to her, though not exactly related.

"Won't you come home to lunch with me? Then you can meet Peggy and the others and see how glad they are to get Pilot back! They'll be awfully glad to see you, really! Please don't be lonely any more—for—I'll be your friend!"

He had risen slowly to his feet, towering over

her. He looked down at the bright face. Keineth slipped her hand into his.

"Oh, please come—it'll be such fun," and she gave his fingers a coaxing, friendly squeeze.

The sour-faced servant muttered, "Well, I never!" under his breath, when he saw his master walk through the door to his waiting car, holding the little girl's hand and listening to her chatter with a smile! It was the strangest sight he had ever beheld in this very strange house!

But it was a stranger sight for the Lees when the big limousine drew up at their curb and Pilot dashed from its door, followed by Keineth and a very, very old man who leaned one hand upon Keineth's shoulder.

"Pilot!" cried Billy, who had seen them through the window.

"And that old man!" echoed Peggy.

In the hall Billy was on his knees with his arms around Pilot's neck.

"Dear, dear old Pilot!" he was saying over and over.

Mrs. Lee, concealing her amazement when

Keineth quaintly introduced "my friend, Mr. Grandison," greeted him cordially and by her smile and gracious manner made the old man immediately feel at home. At the table she placed him between Keineth and Peggy, and Peggy found that he was not such a cross old man after all!

"It's just like a story, Ken," she said after he had gone away and Keineth had given them an account of her morning's adventure. "You have found a fairy grandfather! But wasn't it scrumptious to see His Aged Grandness eating hash?"

"Well, I guess Keineth's money has been well spent," added Mrs. Lee, looking fondly at the little girl. "For I think—besides making Billy very happy, it has opened a new life to a very lonely old man!"

"I'll never forget what Ken has done," said Billy solemnly, as though he was taking a vow. "She's just all right and I'd like to see anyone that says she ain't!"

"Billy—your English!" pleaded his mother.

But Keineth blushed with pleasure. She knew she had won Billy's everlasting friendship!

That evening a boy brought to the door a huge package addressed to Miss Keineth Randolph. It was a set of beautifully bound books, " The Lives of the Masters," and with them came a little note written in a queer, old-fashioned handwriting.

May these books give instruction, inspiration and courage to one whose feet are on the threshold. They are bought with the money you unselfishly spent to give a boy back his dog.

Your devoted friend,

WILFRED GRANDISON.

CHAPTER XXIII

SURPRISES

"WHY, I just can't believe that I'm Peggy Lee!" Peggy stood in the aisle of a sleeping car and looked up and down its length. Keineth, from her superior knowledge of sleeping cars, was pointing out to Peggy its arrangements. Both girls were dressed in new coats and hats and carried with them the bag Aunt Josephine had given Keineth and in which they had packed their nightgowns and toilet articles.

For they were starting for Washington!

Two days before Mr. Lee had come home and asked the children what would be the biggest surprise they could imagine! Of course they had guessed all sorts of things and he had teased them for quite a little while over it! Then, very quietly, he had said:

"Do you think you would like to make a little trip to Washington?"

Keineth had not been able to speak. Peggy,

jumping from her chair, rushed at her father and threw both arms about his neck.

"All of us?" she cried between hugs.

"No, this time we'll leave mother home with Billy and Alice. Then the next time they'll go."

Peggy's eyes swept over Billy's and Alice's disappointed faces.

"Oh, I wish we could all go!"

"Mother'll make it up to them, my dear. I'll wager right now all sorts of nice plans are floating around in her head. Well, can you be ready?"

"Can we——!" they cried in chorus.

The hours then were full of excited preparations. The new clothes had to be purchased. "Keineth may be invited to meet the President," Mrs. Lee had laughingly explained, as she held two pretty hats, one in each hand, and considered them carefully.

"Oh, wouldn't that be *wonderful!*" Keineth whispered. She wanted to ask him so many questions about Daddy—she would tell him that she could keep a secret!

Billy gave them a thousand instructions. They must remember everything they saw to tell him! They must climb the big monument and walk up the

Capitol steps and hear the echo in the rotunda of the Capitol Building. They must go to Camp Meyer and to Arlington and to Mount Vernon and be sure to see Washington's swords!

"And the White House china," Mrs. Lee added. "It must be as good as a lesson in history to look at that exhibit in the White House! They'd tell the tastes of the different ones who used them! I can picture pretty Dolly Madison ordering all new china because the pattern of the old did not please her!"

Billy broke in: "I'd want to go to the Treasury Building and see all the money and the watchmen that guard the building from little watch-houses! And the big machine where they destroy all the old money! Four men have keys and they go and unlock it and put the money in it and it gets ground and ground by sharp knives until it's just a pulp! And then they sell the pulp! I wish I had one of those keys!" Billy was very excited.

"And I want to see the Indian Exhibit at the National Museum," declared Peggy.

"You will, my dear, and a great many other things of interest."

Little wonder that she could scarcely believe that she was Peggy Lee! As the train pulled away Keineth was very quiet. She was recalling how often her Daddy had told her of the interesting places in the National Capital and how often he had said, "Some day we'll go there together!" And now she was really going, but Daddy was far away.

"Well, aren't you children going to take off your things and stay awhile?" asked Mr. Lee, coming in from a smoke on the platform.

They laughed and began to lay aside their wraps. "I can't picture myself sleeping on that funny little shelf," Peggy declared. "What if I should roll out!"

There were a number of other people on the car. The children watched them closely and tried to do whatever they did. Peggy's eyes grew round with interest as she saw the porter deftly spread out mattresses and blankets and make cosy beds where nothing but seats had been. The girls insisted upon sharing the same berth and drew lots "for position," as Peggy put it. Keineth drew the place by the window and was soon cuddled there. And though they had declared that they were going

to lie awake for a long time watching out of the window, their heads had scarcely touched the pillow when the motion of the train lulled them to sleep.

Then the night would have passed like any night at home, only that Peggy *did* fall out of bed!

She awakened suddenly to find herself in a heap in the aisle of the car with the brakeman, a swinging lantern in his hand, bending over her.

"Well, bless my stars!" he was saying.

It took a moment or two for Peggy to realize where she was and what had happened! Then, torn between a desire to laugh at herself and to cry with chagrin, she clambered back into the berth and snuggled very close to Keineth.

It was too funny not to tell Keineth, who had wakened, but after she told her she made Keineth promise, crossing her heart over and over, that she would never, never, never tell Billy that Peggy had rolled out of bed!

"Where are we? It isn't a bit different from home," the girls cried as they stood the next morning with Mr. Lee viewing from the platform the country through which they were speeding.

"This is Maryland. In just half an hour we'll

be in Washington. We'll wait and eat breakfast at the hotel there."

Mr. Lee was acting curiously excited and impatient. He looked at his watch several times. "On time," the girls heard him say once or twice—as if it made any difference. Before they were in the city he told them to put on their wraps.

"We'll be the first ones off," he said.

It was only a moment then before they had rolled into the station shed. They stepped from the train and walked a long way down between rows of cars. A great many people seemed hurrying in every direction. There was a dull roar echoing through the vaulted smoky space pierced by the loud voices of the trainmen giving their orders and the occasional clang of a bell. Then they passed through a little iron gate into the station. Keineth, clinging to Mr. Lee's arm, thought it quite the biggest place she had ever seen! Every step made an echo and though there were crowds of people there did not seem to be many because there was so much room! Mr. Lee gave some checks to a porter, then stood looking up and down the great space as though expecting to see someone. Peggy was just whisper-

ing something in Keineth's ear when Keineth gave a clear, joyous cry.

For there, stepping out from a little group, walking straight toward them, a smile on his tanned face, both arms extended as though they could not reach her quickly enough, was her dear, dear daddy!

CHAPTER XXIV

MR. PRESIDENT

HER own dear father!

Keineth had not realized until then how very dear he was to her! She clung to him as though she could not bear to ever lose her hold. A woman waiting in the station was watching the little scene, and turned away, wiping her eyes. And Keineth did not know whether she wanted to laugh or to cry!

So this was Mr. Lee's big surprise! He had known John Randolph was in Washington!

"This is Peggy," Keineth managed finally to say. At which John Randolph put his arm about Peggy and kissed her, too!

Mr. Lee said something about breakfast, and Keineth's father hurried them into a waiting taxicab. And as they drove away Keineth was so busy looking at her father's dear face that she did not notice the Capitol, its noble dome outlined against the blue morning sky. But Peggy gave an excited little shriek.

"Oh—look—look!"

So, with her hand in her father's, Keineth saw Washington! He told the driver to go slowly while he pointed out to them the buildings they passed. The whole city lay bathed in sunshine that brought with it the balminess of real springtime for which they waited so long in the North. Robins were singing in the trees, so gladly that Keineth thought that even they must have guessed how happy she was!

Keineth and Peggy listened while John Randolph told Mr. Lee of his trip home across the ocean—how to escape the submarines of the Germans they had run cautiously, at half-speed, as in a fog, with look-outs posted all along the ship's decks and all lights out! Their voices were very serious as they talked and Keineth noticed for the first time that her father's face, under its tan, looked worn and tired, as though he had been working very hard.

But each time that his eyes came back to her face they lighted with a smile.

"I can hardly believe that this is my little girl," he said to Mr. Lee. "Her stay with you has done wonders for her!" And what he said was very true, for the year had changed Keineth from the

shy-eyed, delicate child he had left to a happy, round-cheeked, strong-limbed girl. The pretty simple dress she wore had the becoming touch of color that Tante used to think unsuitable, and her fair hair, drawn loosely back from her forehead and fastened with a barrette, hung in heavy waves over her shoulders.

At the hotel after breakfast Keineth's father opened his trunk and took from it a box of gifts he had collected from every country he had visited. A carved box from Japan, a gay Chinese robe from Pekin, dolls of all sorts, brass plates from Egypt, embroidered scarfs from Constantinople, coral from Italy and other treasures over which Keineth and Peggy went into ecstasies of delight!

"For us?" she cried to her father.

He smiled—her "us" meant to him that Keineth had found at last the true joy of friends.

"Divide them as you wish, my dear," he answered. Thereupon the two girls sat down, cross-legged upon the floor and commenced assorting the gifts into little piles—for "Aunt Nellie," for "Barbara," the Japanese dolls for Alice, and, of course, the carved dagger from Petrograd, for Billy!

"Oh, were ever girls as happy as we are?" Peggy cried.

Later Mr. Lee broke in upon this pleasant occupation. "If we are here to see Washington we'd better start out! Keineth—after luncheon your father wants to take you for a little walk—Peggy and I will go to the National Museum."

So it was that Keineth, trim in her new hat and coat, found herself early in the afternoon walking slowly down the "Avenue of the Presidents," holding her father's hand. They said little, each felt too happy to talk much, time enough for the stories later.

Suddenly through the trees of Lafayette Park, all a-quiver with their new spring leaves, Keineth glimpsed the stately lines of the White House.

She stopped short. "Daddy, is that where the President lives?"

Mr. Randolph smiled. "Yes, my dear! And we are going there now to call—at his request!"

So Keineth was really going to see Mr. President!

She felt very excited as she walked past the policeman guarding the gates and up the winding avenue leading to the great columns before the door. Through the branches of the trees the sun was

shining slant-wise against the square-paned windows, making tiny sparks of fire. Another policeman at the door halted them. Keineth thought it too bad that the President of the United States should have to be guarded in this manner—for who could want to harm him? Then they were ushered into the entrance hall, where a servant took the card Mr. Randolph offered.

For Keineth the simple stateliness of the place had an atmosphere of romance. Staring curiously about her she went slowly through the spacious corridors to an oval-shaped room whose walls and windows were hung in heavy blue silk. The sunlight streamed through the windows across the highly polished floor and glinted through the crystals of the great chandelier hanging from the ceiling. From between the heavy blue curtains Keineth caught a glimpse of the green lawn outside, sloping down to the stretches of the Park—all adot with dandelions.

Her father pointed out to her the gold clock on the mantel and told her that it had been presented by Napoleon the First to General Lafayette and by him in turn to Washington. Then as they turned

to examine the bronze vases standing on either side of the clock a quiet voice startled them.

"And so this is the little soldier girl!"

And there across the room, one hand extended, stood the President of the United States!

Keineth tried to say something, but found that her tongue would not move. But President Wilson, not noticing her embarrassment, was shaking her hand and talking as though they were old friends.

"Of course—after our letters—an introduction is unnecessary! I am delighted, however, to meet in person John Randolph's daughter."

He turned then from Keineth to her father and Keineth felt a glow of pride in the tone of intimacy with which the President greeted her father.

After they had exchanged a few words he took her hand and drew her towards a divan.

"Let us sit down here and have a little talk. I wonder if you know, my dear girl, what a wonderful man your father is."

Keineth smiled at this! President Wilson, patting her hand upon his knee, went on:

"His work for us is not done, either! And I

am going to ask you to help me, Miss Keineth. I want him in my official family—I need his judgment and advice—need it badly! If he tries to refuse me then you must make him do what I want him to do! Wouldn't you like to live in Washington?"

"Oh—yes!" cried Keineth, then she stopped short. "But—it wouldn't have to be a secret, would it?"

The President broke into a hearty laugh. "No, indeed, my dear!" Then, more seriously, "You were very brave to help us guard so carefully his journeying. It was necessary that it should be kept a secret because in every land where he went there were bitter enemies to the work he was trying to do—enemies who, if they had had one word of the mission upon which he was going about, would have done everything within their power to defeat its purpose, even to taking his life without one moment's hesitation! Keineth, this is a funny world. It is made up of big nations and small nations and they struggle against one another like so many bad, heedless boys fighting in an alley."

"I know!" cried Keineth, bright-eyed. "When they ought to be living like nice families in a quiet

street, each one keeping its own yard clean from rubbish and the doorsteps washed." She used her father's words with careful precision.

President Wilson turned to John Randolph. "The child has described it, exactly! What an ideal! Do you think we'll ever reach it?" Then, to Keineth, "And that is the mission that took your father abroad—to lay before the peoples of those other lands this plan of democracy; to show them the picture of how we all—as nations—might live as you have described it, like thrifty families on a clean-kept street, some in finer houses than others, perhaps, but each one with its door-step clean and its corners well cleared out. Well—well, in your lifetime you may come to it, child. And when you do—remember that the way was opened by the message your father carried!"

They talked a little longer of things Keineth could not understand, though she listened with rapt attention while her father spoke of the Emperor of Japan and the Czar of Russia as though they were just ordinary men!

President Wilson walked with them to the door; he shook hands and begged them to come again!

"I should like some day to show you around Washington myself, Miss Keineth," he said, patting her shoulder. Then as they walked out toward the street gates Keineth turned back and saw him watching from the open door. She waved her hand impulsively and he lifted his in a farewell salute.

Keineth drew in a very deep breath: as Peggy would say, "Who *could* believe that she was little Keineth Randolph?"

CHAPTER XXV

THE CASTLE OF DREAMS

When her father suggested that they let the sightseeing wait and take a walk, Keineth was delighted. She wanted more than anything else right then to talk and talk and talk to her daddy! There was so much to tell him!

"We'll have plenty of time to see all the interesting things," Mr. Randolph said. "We'll stay here a week or two longer."

"Peggy, too?" asked Keineth.

"Peggy, too, of course!"

"Oh, what *fun!*" cried Keineth, squeezing her father's hand with both of hers. She fairly danced along by his side, so that he had to walk very fast to keep up with her light feet. 'Way across the Park through the trees they could see the waters of the Potomac gleaming blue, and beyond the hills of Arlington. Two weeks—her eyes shone—two weeks with Daddy and Peggy!

"You know, Daddy, that Peggy is my very best

friend!" Keineth said very solemnly. She commenced to tell him of Overlook and the happy summer days—of Stella, whom she had seen several times during the winter and had learned to love—of Grandma Sparks and her quaint old home—of Mr. Cadowitz and the hours in his queer studio—of the Jenkins cousins and the little Penny girls. He listened with a smile, perhaps not always able to follow her excited chatter, but certain from it that Keineth had found what he had hoped she would find when he had sent her to the Lees.

Then Keineth thought of a confession she must make.

"Is it dreadful, Daddy, but I have forgotten to be lonesome for Tante? I am ashamed because I do not think of her oftener. Where do you suppose she is?"

"I saw her, my dear! Think what a coincidence it was! When I was in Paris one of the secretaries from the American Embassy took me around to visit the soup kitchens they have opened up there to feed the needy children of the soldiers at the front. At the very first one we went into, a woman in charge came up to greet us—and it was good Madame

Henri! I might have known she'd be doing something like that! She knew me, of course—the tears ran down her cheeks as she clasped my hand. She couldn't say a word at first. She herself took us through the place and as it was at noontime, we stayed to see her hungry family. It was a sight I'll never forget—women, shivering in ragged clothing, with babes in their arms and gaunt, unhappy faces and eyes that looked at you as if they were eternally asking something and afraid to ask! Most of them had some scrap of dingy crêpe somewhere about them—had lost their men at the battle-front! And little children gulping down the hot soup as though they were starved! Tante said it was the only meal most of them had during the day. After her work was over she and I went into a little room to talk. I knew she wanted to ask me about you—'her baby,' she called you. When I told her you were well and happy she broke down and sobbed 'thank God!'

"She told me that her mother was dead and that her brother's wife and her little family were on a farm in northern France. When they did not need her longer she had gone to Paris to help.

" ' Give her my love,' she said to me—I knew she meant you. ' Keep her safe! It is my one comfort in these terrible days that she is not suffering! I love America—but I can never go back—my work is here!' I knew then that until the end Madame Henri would stick to her post and help wherever she could do the most good. She is a noble woman! "

Keineth sighed. " It doesn't seem right to be so happy when others are not," she said, troubled.

" But remember what she said—because you are happy is the one bright spot in Madame Henri's life! So it may be with others; you can always help someone."

" You couldn't do anything else at the Lees'," broke in Keineth, " because Aunt Nellie is so kind and unselfish that we children are terribly ashamed to be anything else! Daddy——" Keineth stopped short; for the first time it crossed her mind that now that her daddy had come back her visit at the Lees' would end. " Where will we live now, Daddy? "

He waited a moment before he answered.

" I am going to ask you to decide that for yourself, Keineth."

Keineth remembered then the night her father had made her decide between Aunt Josephine and the Lees! How hard it had been!

John Randolph led her to a bench. "Let's sit down here and talk. I'll show you two pictures, Keineth, and you shall choose. You heard what the President said; he has asked me to be in his Cabinet! That is a great honor—perhaps the highest honor that may ever come to me!"

"You'll be more than a soldier that doesn't wear a uniform?"

Her father smiled at her quaint phrasing. "Yes, much more! But, besides the honor and the work of the position it will mean this to us—we will have to take a house here in Washington and live in such a way that we can entertain many, many guests. My time will never be my own, for there will be countless social demands besides the duties of the office—I will be able to spend very little time with my little girl! But she will not mind that because she will have ever so many new friends and new things to do, too. And we're too simple to know how to live such a life, so there's only one thing that'd happen——"

Keineth was making tiny circles in the soft grass with the toe of her shoe. She had listened intently, now she interrupted quickly: "Aunt Josephine!"

"Yes—Aunt Josephine would have to come down to show us how!"

For some reason Keineth did not like the picture —and yet Daddy had said it was a great honor! But Aunt Josephine——

Near the Monument the Marine Band had begun its program for the first afternoon concert of the season. A great many people had begun to gather in groups on the green. The music had seemed to reach Keineth and her father as though it was all a part of the soft spring air and beauty around them— they had scarcely heeded it as they talked! But suddenly a familiar note struck Keineth's ear. She lifted her head quickly.

"Oh, listen!" she cried, clutching his arm. "Listen!"

"What is it, child?" He was startled by the look on her face. She had sprung to her feet.

"That—that——" she whispered as though her voice might drown out the soft strains of the music, "that is my Castle of Dreams!"

She lifted her hand to beg him not to speak until it had ended. They listened together until the last note died away.

"Beautiful, my dear, but——"

She turned shining eyes toward him. "I wrote it," she added simply.

"You—you——" He stared at her in such a funny way that Keineth burst out laughing. "Why, my dear——"

"Aunt Nellie taught me to write music! And I sold this! I didn't want to tell you until I had a chance to play it for you."

"You—wrote—that?" He seemed not able to really believe. "My little girl?" A world of pride warmed the tone of his voice.

"Yes, and it's such fun putting down what comes to my fingers! Only Mr. Cadowitz says that I must learn a great deal more and practice what the masters can teach me. And Aunt Nellie says, too, that I ought to wait until I have finished school."

"Yes, they are right," Mr. Lee put in. Then he caressed the small fingers that lay in his clasp. "But, my dear little girl, what a joy for you some

day! It is a wonderful gift to tell your thoughts in music! When you have built up a strong body and a good mind you can work with all your heart and soul!"

Keineth told him then the story of Pilot and Mr. Grandison. Her father was deeply interested. He recalled that he had heard his father speak of him once or twice. "He must have had a very lonely life," he added. "We must see something of him now and then, my dear!"

"Oh, he will be glad!" Keineth described the big house on the outskirts of the city where she had gone with her check; its lonely rooms that all his money could not make cheerful. That led her to tell of the beautiful books and how Mr. Grandison had one day taken her and Peggy to see "Pollyanna"; of riding there in the big limousine and wearing the precious pink dresses!

The afternoon sun was dropping. The concert had ended and the crowds were slowly moving away. John Randolph's face wore its far-away look as though he was dreaming things. His eyes, as he turned them upon Keineth, were very serious.

"You know, child, we're given things in this

world—good health and fortune and gifts like your music—and my writing—but I don't believe we're given them just to enjoy them ourselves! We're meant to share them! I haven't told you the other picture, my dear!"

"Oh, no!" cried Keineth. How could she have forgotten Aunt Josephine!

"I've had a dream, Keineth, these months that I've been gone! It's been a dream of the little home we'd make in some quiet corner where I could write and you could grow and play. It'd be a simple home, but we'd have a great many friends around us. There's a lot in my head I want to write, too—I long for time to do it! I couldn't help but think as I travelled over almost all the lands of the globe that people are alike after all—only some of us have learned things faster than others and some have a lot to learn. If those who see the vision could teach the others—well, to live, as we said, like respectable, happy families in a peaceful street—then this world would know a brotherhood we haven't got now. It could come after this war—we could all be comrades, always going forward shoulder to shoulder! I feel as if I want to write and write and write about

it until that picture goes all over the world! Couldn't I do more for all my fellowmen that way than giving up my time to the immense duties of a Cabinet official?" He turned a frowning face toward Keineth, as though from this twelve-year-old girl he expected help in his perplexity.

Keineth's face was aglow.

"Could the little home be near Peggy?"

Her father nodded. "For a while, anyway."

"And could I go to school with Peggy?"

"Yes, I want you with your friends."

"And you'd have time to play with me?"

"Lots of time—I'd take it! That was part of my dream."

"Oh, Daddy, I like that picture lots best! Only——" She suddenly recalled what her father had said. "It would be such a great honor for you to be in the President's Cabinet! And he told me I must make you!"

"Keineth, dear, that honor would not mean half as much to me as the joy of serving my fellowmen through my writing! We'll show the President the two pictures—I know he will understand!"

Still Keineth hesitated. "Would we—would we

have to have Aunt Josephine?" Then she added, as though a little ashamed, "but Aunt Josephine can be awfully jolly when—she forgets."

"Forgets what, child?"

"Oh, that—that she's so—so rich!" Keineth stammered.

John Randolph laughed. "We'll have her part of the time and maybe we can make her—forget."

"You have decided, you are very sure?" he asked after a moment, and he swept his hand toward the nearby buildings of the city as though to remind her of the interesting life that might lie there.

But Keineth's shining eyes saw a vision beyond them—long, happy days with Daddy and Peggy and the others; a home, too; real school days, such as she had never known in her life—perhaps another summer at Fairview.

"I'd love Washington, but—I like your dream best, Daddy!" she answered.

"I knew you would! And now, kitten, what do you say to finding Peggy and her father and going somewhere to have some cakes and hot chocolate?"

Through the soft April sunlight they went towards the White House and the thronging streets.

Keineth walked quickly, eager to find Peggy and tell her everything! How glad Peg would be!

She hummed a few notes without realizing that it was a strain from her own music! She stopped suddenly and lifted laughing eyes to her father's face.

"Isn't it funny, Daddy? I called my music 'The Castle of Dreams'! We were both dreaming the same dream!"

"And we're going to have our Castle, Keineth!"

THE SUNNY BOY SERIES

By RAMY ALLISON WHITE

Children! Meet Sunny Boy, a little fellow with big eyes and an inquiring disposition who finds the world at large a wonderful place to live in. There is always something doing when Sonny Boy is around.

In the first book of the series he visits his grandfather in the country and learns of many marvelous things on a farm, and in the other books listed below he has many exciting adventures which every child will enjoy reading about.

SUNNY BOY IN THE COUNTRY
SUNNY BOY AT THE SEASHORE
SUNNY BOY IN THE BIG CITY
SUNNY BOY IN SCHOOL AND OUT
SUNNY BOY AND HIS SCHOOLMATES
SONNY BOY AND HIS GAMES
SUNNY BOY IN THE FAR WEST
SUNNY BOY ON THE OCEAN
SUNNY BOY WITH THE CIRCUS
SUNNY BOY AND HIS BIG DOG
SUNNY BOY IN THE SNOW
SUNNY BOY AT WILLOW FARM
SUNNY BOY AND HIS CAVE
SUNNY BOY AT RAINBOW LAKE

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

2 21L .47